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May all those who read this book be benefited.

May all beings be happy.

For the Benefit of many

Acharya S. N. Goenka

Talks and Answers to Questions
from Vipassana Students
1983-2000

This compilation is intended for students of Vipassana as taught by S. N. Goenka

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Foreword

Since the early 1980s in India and around the world, there has been an astonishing increase in the number of Vipassana course offered each year and the number of centres devoted to the practice of this teaching. This growth has been possible because of the selfless service of thousands of meditators. Working in many different capacities, they have freely given help so that still more people could take steps on the path of liberation.

To ensure that their service yields the best results, over the years Goenkaji has frequently given guidance to all who participate in this work. At yearly meetings in India or on visits to various centres, he has spoken about many different aspects of Dhamma practice and service. The transcripts of those talks and question and answer sessions are the sources for this volume.

The material included here covers the years from 1983 to 2000, For the most part it is presented chronologically, but not in every case, one exception, for example, is the talk placed at the end of the book since it provides a fitting and inspiring summation.

In all this mass of material, Goenkaji returns again and again to a central theme: what it means to give Dhamma service and how a server ought to work, He explains this at length but always by presenting a few key points.

The first is that service must arise from practice of the Dhamma. Those wishing to help others walk on the path of liberation must be walking on the path themselves: that is, they must maintain a regular daily practice of meditation and strive to observe the Five Precepts as carefully as possible. In fact, Goenkaji says, service is a way of deepening one's practice by developing the ten pāramīs.

Secondly, service must spring from a base of mettā. Even when servers have to discipline students, they should do so with a volition to help, with a heart filled with goodwill.

Another point is that service must be given selflessly, humbly, without any egotism No-one should think that they are indispensable; no-one should suppose that service is an opportunity to do things as they want, or to achieve their own aims. Instead, it is an opportunity to set aside one's own views and become an instrument of the Dhamma.

This is how servers can work together harmoniously. And this is how the Dhamma will continue flourishing in its pristine purity for the good and benefit of many.

Goenkaji discusses these points in depth, as well as numerous other issues, for guidance on a particular issue, the detailed index directs readers to the passages dealing with that topic. In addition, a glossary explains the Pāli terms.

For publication purposes the source material has been condensed and edited to some extent, but every effort has been made to maintain Goenkaji's distinctive voice and faithfully convey his meaning.

If readers have a chance to listen to the original audio taps, they will find them very inspiring. Most of the taps are available for Dhamma servers to listen to between courses at Vipassana centres.

Goenkaji has not himself been able to read through this text, and it may therefore contain some errors and inconsistencies; these are the responsibility of the editors alone. Comments are welcome that might help to rectify any flaws.

May this volume prove useful to those whose service is a vital part of the spread of Dhamma.

ORGANIZING COURSES

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA KHETTA, INDIA
1983

ORGANIZING COURSES

Dear trustees and course organizers:

This winter I have been reviewing some important Dhamma issues. With the experience of the successful completion of more than 50 assistant teacher led courses this past year, the following guidelines were drawn up at the recent assistant teacher meeting with me in Hyderabad in February 1983. They will serve to help the continuing spread of Dhamma.

Also, some general policies for all courses regarding *dāna*, food served on courses, assistant teacher scheduling, and some other points were reviewed.

The assistant teacher is authorized by me to conduct Vipassana courses on my behalf. As such the assistant teacher is my representative and should be received by the students in this light. This is especially so on the course site where the assistant teacher bears the responsibility of seeing that the technique is transmitted properly, that the courses are organized and run as per my instructions, and that the proper atmosphere is created to assist students in their meditation.

The greater frequency of courses is obviously providing many more opportunities for students to take Dhamma than I could provide by myself. However, to take full advantage of these opportunities, it is now more important than ever to enlist the service and support of old students. Without a minimum of old student infrastructure, there is a danger of efforts being spread too thinly and of assistant teacher courses being liable to mismanagement. This could ultimately result in a weakening of the transmission of Dhamma. Also it is important for older students to encourage newer ones to get involved in organizing and working on courses, so that they can gain the training necessary to take on more responsibility.

The most important point in the code of conduct for the assistant teacher is that he is there to serve others. In doing so, he should never come to expect, nor use Dhamma to secure, a better position for himself or his family. The teaching of Dhamma must never become his means of livelihood nor should he profit materially from it in any way.

Until now I have emphasized that the assistant teachers should add very little to the presentation of the course, that the course should run as it is on the tapes from early morning to the *mettā* session with the workers each night. Only in cases where the tape quality is poor or a mechanical failure occurs or for some needed clarification should the assistant teacher supplement the teaching. In the future I will individually assign functions of the teaching now covered by the tapes to the assistant teachers.

Should students or organizers ever feel a conflict between the behaviour of an assistant teacher and their understanding of Dhamma, the resolution of it should first be attempted with the assistant teacher concerned. If that fails, only then should I be referred to. It is important to avoid the unwholesome act of speaking ill of any teacher.

The following points for organizers worldwide were discussed with me at length in Hyderabad. They apply to all courses either with me or my assistants. The following policies have been drafted as per my instructions and approval.

DĀNA AND COURSE FINANCES

In an effort to simplify and standardize course procedures, use the proper wording regarding *dāna* when either announcing a course or discussing it with prospective students. Courses are run solely on a donation basis. We have changed the wording to give more emphasis to *dāna* as an integral part of the practice.

Course organizers are strongly encouraged to rely locally for *dāna* to cover course expenses; this includes initial capital outlay for site rental, food purchases, transportation, etc. Only in exceptional circumstances may exceptions to this guideline be applied for by consulting the Teacher or assistant teacher.

If near the end of a course, on Day 10, a deficit of 20 percent or more exists, then the following morning, Day 11, a statement only of the course expenses in total and donations received to date may be posted.

If at the very end of the course a deficit still remains, it should be borne locally at least for three months. During this time the deficit can be announced in the local newsletter (if possible) and/or discussed among old students in light of the difficulty of organizing future courses if such deficits continue.

If after this three-month period the deficit still remains, then the Teacher or assistant teacher can be consulted about the availability of funds to cover such a contingency.

In addition, there is an old student *dāna* letter clarifying course finances for old students only. Trusts should decide whether it is necessary to send this to every old student who applies to do a course. Therein a range of expenses is mentioned for their information only. (These figures should be adapted to reflect local conditions.) While the *dāna* system continues to function successfully, it has been decided to further clarify the responsibility such a system places upon the old students who come repeatedly to these courses.

In general, organizers are urged to keep in close contact with the Teacher or assistant teacher directly on all points of course organization, particularly regarding site selection, finances, scheduling, public announcements, etc.

[NOTE: If it becomes necessary to write to Goenkaji in India concerning finances, it should be clearly stated that the money you are referring to belongs to your organization, association, or trust. It is important not to convey the false impression that somehow the money is related to Goenkaji personally.]

COURSE FOOD/MENUS

While planning a course menu, attention should be given to providing simple wholesome vegetarian meals at modest cost. Organizers should remember that as Vipassana in this tradition is unique, no other philosophies or views should be permitted on the course. This understanding precludes the designing of the course menu according to the cook's notion of "raising consciousness through diet," or similar philosophies of "health foods," e.g., macrobiotics, organic foods, etc.

Regarding requests for "special food," students should be reminded that courses are financed solely by donations and that on such courses students live on the charity of others. By taking only what is offered they are able to develop their *pāramīs*, particularly that of renunciation (*nekkhamma*).

Ample nutritious food should be provided at mealtimes and students should eat at these times only. This is an important part of the discipline.

In cases where for strictly medical reasons special food may be a necessity, they should be cleared through the Teacher or assistant teacher before the course. While all efforts should be made to accommodate legitimate requests, it should also be kept in mind that a student must possess a minimum of physical and mental health to take Dhamma. Organizers should not feel obligated to accommodate all special complex food requests. It is left to the prospective students to decide if they can accept what is offered.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Another very important point is that, from the moment the course begins to its completion, there should be no physical contact between persons of the same or opposite sex. This applies to the management as well. Needless to say, this will also require the complete setting aside of all types of massage and/or healing practices.

These guidelines concerning diet and physical contact, including such things as massage, healing arts, yoga, tai chi, etc., exist not only when a course is in progress but at all times at Dhamma houses and meditation centres. This is not meant as a condemnation of these practices, but during the training and at the training sites the practice of Vipassana is to be maintained in its pristine purity.

FINAL WORD FROM GOENKAJI CONCERNING DHAMMA FUNDS

I would again like to emphasize that finances should be properly handled. Every cent donated by a student is sacred money and therefore should be used for Dhamma work only. Neither the Teacher nor the assistant teachers nor the trustees nor the organizers of courses are the owners of such *dāna* funds. These funds should never be used for anybody's personal benefit. For the Teacher and the assistant teachers, only the travel, food and medical expenses, when necessary, should be provided. Dhamma money should not be used for shopping, sightseeing or other personal matters.

May the above guidelines help in the spread of Dhamma.

With affluent *mettā*, S.N. Goenka

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
FEBRUARY 2, 1985
CLOSING ADDRESS

FOR THE GOOD OF MANY

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

The time has come once again for many to learn Dhamma. As Sayagyi U Ba Khin used to say, "The clock of Vipassana has struck." We are fortunate to have the opportunity to develop our *pāramīs* by assisting Dhamma to spread. It will spread because it is bound to, not because of the efforts of a particular person or group. We are only tools of the Dhamma. How swiftly things have been moving, and all because of Dhamma! Dhamma is so great, so powerful! It can give full competence to the most incompetent person, highest ability to one lacking all ability.

Dhamma finds the means to help those whose time has ripened to become liberated. Therefore in the last fifteen years so many people have taken up the burden of serving others by spreading Dhamma. Actually this is not a burden but rather a good fortune. And in this way Dhamma has spread beyond all expectation, not only in India but also in various parts of the world. It is only the beginning, but a good, encouraging beginning.

Sometimes someone tells me, "It is unbelievable that single-handedly you have done so much work in so short a period." I say, "Nothing is done single-handedly." I remember how from the first course I conducted, people came forward to organize, to manage, to make all the necessary arrangements. Course after course, students have given selfless service. Despite their many worldly responsibilities, they give time to work for the benefit of others.

The management and the Teacher are like the two wheels of a cart, the two wings of a bird. Naturally, without the Teacher the management cannot help to spread the Dhamma. But neither can the Teacher give service for the spread of Dhamma without the support of the Dhamma servers. I feel so grateful to all those dedicated students who have been helping in whatever capacity. Nothing was done single-handedly; it was done by the devoted service of a large number of students. I am pleased that the assistant teachers are receiving similar cooperation from Dhamma servers in different parts of the world.

The teachers and the servers are equally important. Neither should feel that they play a greater role. Of course, when an assistant teacher sits on the Dhamma seat, the co-servers pay respect. By doing so they develop the good quality of respect for Dhamma, not for a person. Anyone who sits on the Dhamma seat represents the Dhamma, the Buddha, the Sangha who maintained the technique through twenty-five centuries in its pristine purity. Therefore the servers pay respect with the awareness of sensations, the understanding of *anicca,*

dukkha, anattā. With that base, pay respect and keep in mind that your job is to co-operate so that the responsibility given to the assistant teacher bears good fruit.

On the other hand, those sitting on the Dhamma seat should always feel humble, understanding that respect is being given not to them but rather to Dhamma, that they simply represent Dhamma. Whether server or teacher, our service is always for the spread of Dhamma.

Both assistant teachers and Dhamma servers must work selflessly, without expecting anything in return. As the Buddha said, "Go your ways for the good of many, for the benefit of many, out of compassion for the world." Whatever the role, whatever responsibility you are given, it makes no difference. Every responsibility is equally important, every way of contributing is so valuable if the volition is simply to be of use in the work, to help more people benefit from Dhamma.

What do the servers gain in return? Why do they leave their homes and serve on courses? They receive no remuneration; they spend their own money for travelling and other expenses. They work without expecting even respect to be given to them. Their service is entirely selfless.

Similarly, what do the assistants get? Even the respect shown them is actually for the Dhamma. Understanding this, the assistants will work without expecting anything. In this way the wheel of Dhamma will keep rotating in its purity.

The Buddha said, "Distribute the Dhamma by making an example of your own pure way of life." Preaching the right way without practising it is meaningless. Assistant teachers and Dhamma servers must understand the importance of leading a good life, and of giving a good example to others. Always bear this in mind, whatever role you play in the work. Remain cautious in all your physical and vocal actions. Live a life of purity for your own good and for the good of others. If you do so, then faith in Dhamma will arise in those who lack it, and will increase in those who have it. In this way you will attract more and more people to Dhamma, for their own benefit.

So long as the base of Dhamma is strong, your service will always be fruitful, whether you help as an assistant teacher or in any other way. Keep Dhamma strong within yourself by regular practice of Dhamma. By doing so you will be able to help the spread of Dhamma effectively, for the good of many.

There is so much misery all around. If we can wipe the tears of even a few people who are suffering, we have paid back a little of our debt of gratitude to the Buddha and to the Sangha, the chain of teachers who have maintained the tradition from ancient times.

May all of you develop Dhamma strength. May you all keep growing in Dhamma, and help others to grow in Dhamma. May more and more people benefit from your service.

May the wheel of Dhamma keep rotating. May the light of Dhamma spread throughout the world. May the darkness of ignorance be dispelled. May more and more people come out of their misery. May all beings be happy, be peaceful, be liberated!

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
DECEMBER, 1985

HOW TO SERVE YOUR SELF-INTEREST

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

This evening I would like to say a few words about serving on courses, segregation and the use of *dāna.*

Earlier today I read the Code of Discipline for Dhamma Servers once again; it is a beautiful article, full of Dhamma. You all must have read it, so there is no use in my repeating it now. But if the pamphlet is left to lie in the office and you don't follow the guidelines, it won't help. You must observe this code of discipline.

You are here on Dhamma land for your own benefit. Even when you are serving others you are doing so for your own benefit. I want every student of Vipassana to be selfish. This is the Buddha's teaching: be selfish. But understand where your real self-interest lies: Your mental action is the real action, not the physical or vocal action; this is what you learn in Dhamma. If your mental action is unwholesome you will harm yourself, even if you appear to be giving enormous service to the students.

There are two kinds of Dhamma service. In the first type you don't come in contact with meditators; for example, you might water plants, whitewash buildings or clean bathrooms. The second kind involves direct contact with students. Whether your service brings you in contact with students or not, you should get the maximum benefit from your stay here.

When you serve in a way that doesn't involve contact with meditators, keep examining how much sympathetic joy you are generating. While you are cleaning or whitewashing you should joyfully think, "The first impression for a new student arriving at this Dhamma centre is so important. My service will help so many who visit!"

When you are watering plants, you should be filled with joy. You should feel a rapport with each plant and as you tend it lovingly you will begin to feel how it generates vibrations of love, of Dhamma. It is not worth doing any job here unless you generate sympathetic joy while you are working. If you think, "Well, I want to sit continuous courses but the management won't allow me, and I don't have enough money to stay in a hotel, so I will stay and serve with negativity," you will pollute the atmosphere of this Dhamma land and simultaneously harm yourself.

If your service brings you directly in contact with students, you must keep examining yourself, "By this service am I harming or helping myself?" Be selfish. Sometimes during the one-

hour group sitting I see a new meditator, perhaps without understanding or perhaps with real cause, get up and leave. Then I am sorry to see a frowning Dhamma server run after the student. How will this server behave outside? I know very well that whatever is said will be full of negativity. If you have a frown on your face, what sort of service can you give? You cannot help others while generating negativity. Even if this person has broken a rule deliberately, without respect for the discipline of the centre, how will your frown help? You need a smile on your face and compassion for the student. You are here to serve this person. If this point is missed, your service is not service.

I receive letters from students who came to Dhamma Giri saying they admire the Dhamma servers so much, many of whom work with such joy, compassion and *mettā*. But I also receive critical letters saying, "Was this an example of Dhamma? The server I met was full of negativity, there was no trace of *mettā* in that person, and I found the whole atmosphere to be full of negativity." If a server generates negativity towards a student, the student will feel surrounded by negativity. By mistake, perhaps out of your enthusiasm to serve, you have created a barrier for someone to progress in Dhamma. This person will never return to a Dhamma centre, and in turn will become a barrier for others who might have come, by saying, "At those centres people talk of Dhamma but do not apply it."

By behaving harshly, without a trace of love, compassion or sympathy for the students, you are not serving them no matter how hard you work. Instead you should feel, "By my service I can encourage those students who have storms to face. I passed through the same storms when I came to my first courses." Don't overlook the fact that students break rules, but be human in dealing with them. If you work in this way, then you are serving not only them but yourself.

Many Western students come to give Dhamma service at Dhamma Giri, where there is a large number of Indian students. Communication is difficult since you don't know the language, but I keep saying, "Dhamma language is understood by everyone, you need not say a word." If an Indian student is breaking a rule, just go and smile and place your hands together in the traditional Indian gesture of greeting. This will be enough for the student to understand; you need not say anything. If you say a hundred words with a frown, it does not help anybody.

Now a few words about segregation: I know most Western students come from a culture where segregation is foreign and you can't understand why it is needed. But the Buddha was very particular about segregation; this is part of the teaching. We find not one or two but hundreds of cases where Māra [the forces opposed to liberation] creates difficulties for meditators in this area. Your biggest enemy is passion. Without too much difficulty a meditator can usually take out the other defilements one after another, but the defilement of passion is so deep that it is difficult to root out.

There are two possible dangers. One is that Māra might stimulate the seed of passion in you. You might talk with somebody of the other

sex without any wrong intention, but once you start talking, standing nearer and nearer to that person, the proximity might stimulate passion. This is a hospital where a deep mental operation is being carried out and because of this operation *saṅkhāras* of passion may be stirred up. While talking to and standing near someone of the opposite sex, the *saṅkhāras* may overpower you. You could make a mistake that would be very harmful for you, and also for the other person.

There is another danger, especially for Western students staying here in India. It has been said, and well said, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." When you are in this country, forget what you do in your own country and understand that you are living in a society where there is a totally different attitude from that in the West. Unfortunately, some so-called gurus from India have taught garbage in the West in the name of meditation, and because of that many Indians are suspicious about Western meditation students and also about meditation teachers. They suspect that a meditation centre is a place for free sex, where people are exploited. If Indians see a Western couple on this Dhamma land sitting in a certain way, or lying down, or walking together in a certain way, suspicion arises in their minds. You don't understand what an obstacle you are creating for the progress of Dhamma on this land.

It is quite possible that a Western male and female are walking together without any passion in their minds, and one puts a hand on the arm of the other. When somebody in the East sees this, he or she may start to generate passion because nobody here would behave like that; not even a husband and wife would do that in public. You have become a seed of Māra for the Indian students and have started harming them.

The Enlightened One knew this. When you are on Dhamma land you have to learn how to live as a *bhikkhu*, a monk, or as a *bhikkhunī*, a nun. Be very careful. Segregation helps you to eradicate your own passion at the deepest level; it makes it easier not to generate passion.

However unpleasant this rule may look, it is for your own benefit. When you go to a hospital the rules have to be obeyed whether you like them or not, because they are made in your interest. Similarly, when you come to a hospital like this, a Dhamma hospital, all the rules have to be obeyed. Obey them willingly; don't have negativity towards them. They are for your own benefit and for the benefit of all those who are coming here.

Now, a few words about the use of *dāna*: If while giving service a Dhamma server wastes even a cent of Dhamma money, he or she is not giving real service. People have to work hard to earn money honestly, so it is difficult for them to give it away. Therefore any donation that has been given must be properly used. A Dhamma server must not waste a cent of it.

During the time of the Buddha, a wealthy king gave 500 new robes to the monks. The cost was nothing to him yet he was attached to his wealth, so he questioned Ānanda, the private secretary of the Buddha, "I have given 500 new robes to the Sangha, what you will do with them?"

Ānanda replied, "I will keep them in storage."

"Why?"

"Only when I find that a monk's robes are worn out will I give him one of these new robes. This is how we use the donations we receive."

"And what will you do with the old, torn robes?" asked the king.

"From the worn robes I cut out some portions and make bedsheets."

"Good. But when these bedcovers are worn out, what do you do?"

"Again I cut out pieces, and make towels," replied Ānanda.

"Good! But when these towels wear out, what do you do then with the cloth?"

"I cut out small pieces and make small hand towels."

"These will also wear out; then what you will do?"

"I will take small pieces, join them, and make some washing rags for those who arrive with muddy feet."

"Wonderful! When those also wear out what you will do?"

"I beat them, pulp them, and make something useful from the pulp."

"Wonderful!"

This is the Buddha's way. Those who give donations expect their *dāna* to be used properly. If they come here and find things lying around wasted they will think that people here don't take care of the donations received, and as a result they won't give anything. If this happens, you are certainly not helping either the previous donors or the new students. Every cent donated must be properly used.

Keep these three points in mind: Your service must be true Dhamma service that gives you real benefit. Segregation has to be observed; it is in your own interest. And lastly, make best use of the contributions received; this is also in your interest.

When you work for your own benefit you will find that you have also started helping others deeply. Dhamma is for one's own good and also for the good of others, for one's own benefit and also for the benefit of others. Dhamma is for one's own liberation and also for the liberation of others.

Make best use of the Dhamma while you are staying here. If your service is good, continue, and improve it wherever possible. If you have not yet learned how to give good service, learn now, give good service and gain merits. Gain purity of mind, develop your *pāramīs*, and come out of all your miseries.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JUNE, 1986

SERVE TO KEEP THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA ROTATING

My dear Dhamma servers:

What is the purpose of Dhamma service? Certainly not to receive board and lodging, nor to pass the time in a comfortable environment, nor to escape from the responsibilities of daily life. Dhamma servers know this well.

Such persons have practised Vipassana and realized by direct experience the benefits it offers. They have seen the selfless service of the teachers, management and Dhamma servers—service that enabled them to taste the incomparable flavour of Dhamma. They have begun to take steps on the Noble Path, and naturally have started to develop the rare quality of gratitude, the wish to repay this debt for all that they have received.

Of course the teacher, management and Dhamma servers gave their service without expecting anything in return, nor will they accept any material remuneration. The only way to pay back the debt to them is by helping to keep the Wheel of Dhamma rotating, to give to others the same selfless service. This is the noble volition with which to give Dhamma service.

As Vipassana meditators progress on the path, they emerge from the old habit pattern of self-centredness and start to concern themselves with others. They notice how everywhere people are suffering: young or old, men or women, black or white, wealthy or poor, all are suffering. Meditators realize that they themselves were miserable until they encountered the Dhamma. They know that, like themselves, others have started to enjoy real happiness and peace by following the Path. Seeing this change stimulates a feeling of sympathetic joy, and strengthens the wish to help suffering people come out of their misery with Vipassana. Compassion overflows, and with it the volition to help others find relief from their suffering.

Of course it takes time to develop the maturity and to receive the training to teach Dhamma, but there are many other ways in which to serve those who have come to join a course, and all of them are invaluable. Truly it is a noble aspiration to be a Dhamma server—a simple, humble Dhamma server.

And those who practise Vipassana start realizing the law of nature according to which actions of body and speech that cause harm to others will also harm those who commit them, while actions that help others will bring peace and happiness to those who perform them. Thus, helping others is also helping oneself. It is therefore in one's own interest to serve. Doing so develops one's *pāramīs* and makes it pos-

sible to advance more quickly and surely on the path. Serving others is, in fact, also serving oneself. Understanding this truth again stimulates the wish to join in the noble mission of helping others to come out of their miseries.

But what is the best way to serve? Without knowing this, servers cannot help others or themselves; instead they might even do harm. However noble the Dhamma mission may be, there can be no true benefit in helping to fulfil it if the volition of the Dhamma server is not sound. The service will not be beneficial if it is given to inflate the server's ego, or to obtain something in return—even if only words of praise or appreciation.

When you give service see that you meditate at least three times a day for one hour each, to keep yourself fit to give service. If you find your mind is agitated or full of negativity and it cannot work properly, then you had better stop serving and join the course. First help yourself! Understand, unless you have helped and strengthened yourself in Dhamma, you can't help others. A lame person cannot support another lame person; a blind person cannot guide another blind person. Strengthen yourself at least enough so that you can give wholesome service.

Every action of yours is important because the students examine the actions of the teacher, the management and the Dhamma servers, and if they find these people are short-tempered they will become discouraged. But if they find the teacher, management and the servers are peaceful, smiling, helpful, and full of love, without a trace of ill will, they will certainly be encouraged to walk diligently on the path.

Therefore, understand that you have a great responsibility. Every action of yours on this Dhamma land should be such that you generate devotion and confidence towards Dhamma in the mind of the newcomers, and you help to strengthen devotion and confidence in the minds of the old students.

Just as you expect a new student to observe the precepts and the discipline of the course, in the same way see that you yourself observe the discipline and silence as much as possible. Say only what is essential. Speak politely, lovingly, truthfully, helpfully. You have to observe all the Five Precepts while you are giving Dhamma service. If you break any precept you will harm the atmosphere of the centre and harm others.

A Dhamma server is not a jailer but a servant, a Dhamma servant. The students are not prisoners. Of course the rules and discipline must be observed, but if a student is found breaking them it does not mean the Dhamma server should take action against this person with the mentality of a jailer towards a convict. No, there must be sympathy. If somebody has broken a rule, it shows that this person is either ignorant or highly agitated. A good Dhamma server will generate a feeling of sympathy and think, "This person is suffering; how can I help him come out of suffering?" This cannot be done by punishment or using hard words full of anger and hatred—that would be like throwing fire on somebody already burning. This person requires soothing words of sympathy, love and compassion.

At times you might have to use strong words but see that they are not hurtful, filled with ill

will. If by mistake you have spoken wrongly, see how quickly you realize this and develop love and compassion towards the same student. Seek an opportunity to meet this person and smilingly speak a few words of love and compassion. If this person was hurt by your wrong action, the bad effect will be washed away and the student will start working once again with enthusiasm.

Understand that even though you are a server, you are always a student. Therefore never try to play the role of the teacher. If a student approaches you with any difficulty pertaining to the meditation, don't be enthusiastic to give advice on the technique to the student. In a humble way take the person to the teacher and let the teacher answer questions pertaining to the technique.

While serving you can give suggestions, but don't expect that these suggestions will be accepted by the manager or by the teacher. Don't inflate your ego or you will start to harm yourself. If you feel agitated because your suggestions have not been accepted, you are not learning Dhamma. You are here to serve, not to dominate others.

Do not expect anything in return for your service. When you insist that your suggestions should be accepted, you are expecting something. Keep understanding: "I am here to serve, that is all. I am learning how to serve without expecting anything in return; I am serving with only one volition: to see that more and more people benefit. May I be a good example to them; this will help them and will help me also."

Understand that while serving you are learning how to apply Dhamma in day-to-day life. After all, Dhamma is not an escape from daily responsibilities. By learning to act according to the Dhamma in dealing with the students and situations here in the little world of a meditation course or centre, you train yourself to act in the same way in the world outside. Despite the unwanted behaviour of another person, you practise trying to keep the balance of your mind, and to generate love and compassion in response. This is the lesson you are trying to master here. You are a student as much as those who are sitting the course.

May all of you who give Dhamma service become strengthened in Dhamma. May you learn to develop your goodwill, love and compassion for others. May all of you progress in Dhamma to enjoy real peace, real harmony, real happiness.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
MARCH 3, 1987
CLOSING ADDRESS

BEARING THE TORCH OF DHAMMA

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

It is a wonderful opportunity that once again in this life we have come together to walk on the path of Dhamma, moving towards the final goal of full liberation. In so many previous lives we have been working together to develop our *pāramīs,* and due to these past associations again we are working together to liberate ourselves and help others to get liberated from the bondages of defilements.

Throughout the world there is so much misery, but the time has ripened for many to practise pure Dhamma and come out of misery. We are fortunate that we have become instruments to serve these people in the correct way, and by helping them come out of their misery certainly we help ourselves. There are many wholesome practical ways to help the starving, the poor, the sick and the illiterate, but the service that is given in Dhamma is incomparable. Dhamma service helps the sufferer gain the strength to go to, and eradicate, the deep-rooted cause of all the sufferings accumulated in countless lives.

How one cooperates in this movement of service to humanity is of utmost importance. Whether one is sitting on the Dhamma seat explaining Dhamma, or one is cooking or cleaning, no job is higher or lower. Service is service. Certainly there is a difference between one service and another, but the true measure of the quality of service is one's volition. If one's ego is inflated by sitting on the Dhamma seat because so many people bow down before it then one knows nothing of Dhamma. Instead, this type of service is harmful because the vibration that such a person creates will pollute the entire atmosphere. People cannot learn Dhamma in these conditions.

In contrast, someone may be just cleaning the toilets or sweeping the floor and yet the mind is suffused with love, compassion and goodwill to provide a clean and healthy environment in which to meditate. Such volition makes that service so wonderful. What is important is the quality of volition of one who is giving the service.

As every organ in the human body is essential, so it is in a Dhamma organization. Everyone who gives service is equally important, but such service is no service unless one is practising Dhamma. Only then can one reap the wonderful fruits of Dhamma as a result of this service.

Those who serve must bear in mind that they exemplify to newcomers the efficacy of the Dhamma. If they are devoid of good qualities they will discourage others from practising

Dhamma. They have a great responsibility to see that their behaviour inspires confidence in Dhamma in those who are doubtful, and greater faith where it already exists.

Whoever serves must become strongly established in Dhamma, and as one does so all attachments to sects, philosophical beliefs and rituals are left behind. This is the yardstick to measure one's development in Dhamma. Once these bondages are no more, one then sees that Dhamma is a way of life, living in peace with oneself and all others. Every action—physical, vocal or mental—should be such that it helps other beings, but these actions cannot be wholesome unless the mind is freed of defilements such as craving, aversion, anger, hatred and ill will. When these are eliminated, good qualities of love, compassion and goodwill naturally arise in the mind. This is Dhamma—a universal path free from all sectarianism.

The aim of Dhamma is to remove the roots of defilements from the deepest level of the mind. Through practice one soon realizes what the root is, where suffering actually begins: in blind reactions of craving and aversion towards sensations within the body. If one learns to maintain equanimity with the understanding of impermanence, one emerges from the unhealthy habit of reacting and the entire mass of the mind is purified. If one forgets the root level one cannot get liberated.

So the student of Vipassana should be clear whether or not one's actions and meditation practice are purifying at the root level. If this understanding is clear the bondages of sectarianism naturally get shattered. Also, the habit of discriminating between one meditator and another will stop, as one realizes that each is a miserable person. One's service is to help people strengthen themselves in the technique and come out of all defilements. If one is serving selflessly in this way, this is a pure Dhamma attitude and the results are bound to be good.

No one serving Dhamma should feel superior or inferior to others. Whatever the task assigned, one should accept it happily as an opportunity to serve for the benefit of many, to bring a smile to faces that were melancholic and help people to grow in Dhamma through continued practice. As one has benefited through one's own practice, one wishes that others who have come on the path may start experiencing peace and harmony.

In this way, serve merely for the sake of serving without expecting anything in return. If people start giving service for any personal gain, be it material or any other kind of gain such as praise, honour or respect, then the entire atmosphere will get charged with unwholesome vibrations. Everyone who gives service has a great responsibility to see that the atmosphere of a Dhamma centre always remains charged with pure Dhamma vibrations for today and future generations. Similarly, those who meditate at a centre, working with the pure technique without mixing it with anything else, will help the Dhamma vibrations of that area.

These vibrations of an area may last for centuries, and generation after generation will come to this Dhamma land and come out of their misery. By one's good service and meditation one

has contributed to this wholesome atmosphere, which has such long-range effects.

Therefore Dhamma service is an extraordinary opportunity. Perform it to liberate yourselves and to help others be liberated from defilements, from bondages, from misery. Be the torchbearers of the Dhamma to dispel the surrounding darkness of ignorance and suffering.

May you be strong to serve suffering beings everywhere. May all miserable people come into contact with Dhamma and be liberated. May you all keep practising Dhamma for your own good and for the good of many.

May all beings be happy.
May all beings be peaceful.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
MARCH 1, 1988
OPENING ADDRESS

THE BRIGHTNESS OF DHAMMA

Companions on the path of Dhamma:

Once again we have gathered together to understand how more suffering people can come in contact with Dhamma. As the work grows, more assistant teachers are appointed, more centres are established and more servers give their service for the spread of Dhamma. This growth is bound to continue and so it is essential that the work be properly organized, avoiding the tendencies that can weaken Dhamma.

At such a time in the growth of Dhamma we are at a crossroads because there is every danger of its turning into an organized religion, and then it will harm rather than help humanity. Once it becomes a sect the essence of Dhamma is gone. This is a delicate situation. On one hand some discipline has to be maintained; on the other hand, if it merely turns into a hierarchy with everyone working within regimented rules, a sect will be established.

Sects arise when egos are predominant, when one's position within the organization is of primary importance. If one sacrifices one's home comforts, business and time with family for Dhamma work and expects some appreciation for one's service, this is madness. This is where the personality cult and sectarianism starts. Selfless service for the benefit of more people is important. Dhamma is important, nothing else. One should be happy with whatever one is asked, or not asked, to do.

One may say that one is working selflessly but only the individual can judge this. Two of the *brahmavihāras*—*muditā* (sympathetic joy) and *karuṇā* (compassion)—are for this purpose. They are yardsticks by which to measure whether one is really developing in Dhamma. If one feels jealousy or enmity towards a fellow server because his service is greatly appreciated, then one has not understood Dhamma. If there is sympathetic joy, one is progressing in Dhamma.

Conversely a fellow server may make a mistake, or what one perceives to be a mistake. If one generates hatred or aversion towards this person then one is far away from Dhamma, but if one's motivation is to help this companion who has slipped, then *karuṇā* is developing. One may even say that one has no hatred towards this person, but if there is a pleasant feeling at another's downfall then one is far away from Dhamma. Keep on examining yourself carefully because nobody else can do this for you.

First establish yourself in Dhamma and then you can serve others properly. If Dhamma is

important rather than this mad "I" then certainly the ego is getting dissolved. However, if one is projecting one's ego in the name of serving Dhamma, no-one can benefit from such service. If one keeps on examining how much the ego is getting dissolved, one is fit to serve the organization.

Over the next few days important work will be carried out to formulate the code of discipline for all those involved in the spread of Dhamma. In such work the individual has no importance because persons may come and persons may go. It is Dhamma that should remain most important in all your decision-making to serve people properly.

The only aim is *bahujana-hitāya, bahujana-sukhāya*. May more and more people benefit from Dhamma, come out of their misery and enjoy real peace and harmony. I see a very bright future. May all of you shine in this brightness with Dhamma so that people get attracted through you, to the Dhamma. May you all be successful working in Dhamma for suffering people everywhere.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

DHAMMA MAHI, FRANCE
AUGUST, 1988

HOW TO STRENGTHEN A DHAMMA CENTRE

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

Now that we have a centre in Europe, an important question has been raised about the need to maintain discipline here. Of course discipline was maintained in the non-centre courses, but it is even more important here because we want the centre to develop strong Dhamma vibrations so that the students who come here benefit far more than was possible in those camps.

Understand: A Dhamma centre is not established only for the benefit of the present students. Properly managed it will continue to serve this part of the world for generations, maybe for centuries. You who are establishing the centre now are pioneers and have a great responsibility. If you maintain the purity of the technique, the purity of the teaching and the purity of the Dhamma vibrations, coming generations will imitate you and also do the same; and so from day to day, year to year, and generation to generation the vibrations will become stronger and stronger.

Some students may not like certain rules. It is the duty of the senior students, the trustees, the management and the assistant teachers to convince those people of their necessity. You can explain that discipline is necessary in a hospital for the well-being of the patients, and similarly discipline is necessary in this Dhamma place, which is like a hospital for people who are miserable. In fact it is even more important in a Dhamma centre because if rules are relaxed here, the anti-Dhamma forces (Māra) will start to play games.

I remember the case of one of the first centres in the West where some of the senior students told me that the rules of segregation are appropriate for Eastern culture, but not for the West. They said, "If you impose such rules it will be too much for the students. When we meet here in our country we shake hands, hug, or kiss each other on the cheek, so physical contact is unavoidable. If this is stopped, people will think that we are too harsh and regimented."

I was not happy, but because the students were pressing hard and they were honest, sincere and respectful, I said, "All right, let us give this a trial. Don't encourage physical contact, but where it is unavoidable this guideline can be relaxed."

It wasn't long before Māra started playing games and after about a year a married couple, both of them very old students, separated because they had developed relationships with two other serious students at the centre. The centre had become a place of courtship, and this encouraged other students to play the same

game. The atmosphere became unbearable, and the senior students themselves realized that strict discipline must be maintained; otherwise the centre would be spoiled.

We can learn from one mistake; we do not have to make the same mistake at every centre. So be very careful, don't allow Māra to find even a small entry on to this Dhamma land, or it will spoil the spread of Dhamma.

Now at Dhamma Mahi, just as at that early centre, some of you want a relaxation of the discipline. There have been objections that people here cannot sing or socialize, at least between courses. No, that would not be healthy at a Dhamma centre. There is nothing wrong with Vipassana students socializing, but that should not take place on Dhamma land. On this land only Dhamma is to be practised. Whether or not there is a course running, strict discipline must be maintained.

Remember that although you apply the rules firmly, you should not become negative. If, with negativity in your mind you ask a student to work properly, then you yourself have started to spoil the atmosphere; you yourself have broken the discipline. If somebody is breaking discipline, there must be immense compassion and infinite love towards this person. You have to be firm, but with deep love and compassion.

Before speaking to a wayward student, first examine whether your mind is balanced and whether you are generating love and compassion towards the person. Only if this is so may you speak to the student; otherwise not. If you are not fit it is better to remain silent and let things take their course. First correct yourself before you try to correct anybody else. This is so important on Dhamma land; otherwise not only will you defile the atmosphere but you will also drive people away.

When students see an experienced server, trustee, manager, or assistant teacher speaking harshly, will they be encouraged to walk on the Dhamma path? They will think, "If these people who have taken so many courses and are here to help others have no love or compassion, what sort of technique is this? What will I learn here?"

Instead of helping people to get established in Dhamma, you will drive them away. It is better to sacrifice one point in the discipline than to spoil the atmosphere of the Dhamma land with negativity. Everyone must be cautious about this.

Also, never go to extremes. It is true that we do not want Dhamma buildings to be painted black or red, but don't go to such an extreme that you say, "Because red is not permitted, we won't use pink either, nor will we allow people to wear red or pink sweaters."

Now, what is this discipline that we have to maintain? Segregation is essential of course. Also, at a Dhamma centre as on a course, there should be no singing or chanting, not even chanting words of Dhamma. Convince questioners of the value of this rule by explaining that when one chants or sings one generates vibrations, and only those who have been properly trained should do that at a centre. One who has been trained to chant goes deep inside with

equanimity and feels sensations whenever there is a pause. This kind of chanting generates healthy vibrations. However developed a student may be, he or she has not been properly trained to chant and should refrain from doing so. Singing is out of the question.

Between courses, gossip and chatter should be discouraged. You do not have to maintain silence but there should be only such talk as is necessary. There are four kinds of verbal impurity: telling lies, backbiting, slanderous talk, and indulging in idle chatter. Although you don't have to be silent, be careful that this fourth impurity is avoided along with the others.

Students who wish to bring their children here should understand that there are not enough servers to look after the children. If families come, the father can stay in the outer compound and look after the child while the mother meditates, and *vice versa*; this is acceptable. Fortunately there is plenty of land here; some arrangement can be made so that these children are kept far away from the meditation compound and do not disturb the students. Understand that when a meditator gives *mettā*, the positive vibrations are very strong; and similarly if a meditator directs negativity at a child, it would also be strong and would harm the child. In the interest of the children, parents should not let them cause any disturbance in the meditation compound.

Under no circumstances should a student or server bring any kind of animal with them. This is totally prohibited in a Dhamma centre. If anybody brings an animal, politely request them to take it away. If they can't, it is better that they leave with their animal.

Then there is the important question of old students and assistant teachers living and working together harmoniously at the centre: The old students and the assistant teachers are the representatives of Vipassana to all others. What sort of example are they if they quarrel and find fault with each other?

The Buddha wanted Vipassana meditators to behave in such a way that they establish confidence in Dhamma in the minds of those who have no confidence in Dhamma, and increase confidence in Dhamma in the minds of those who already have confidence in Dhamma. Responsible meditators have to be very careful. Nothing should be done that would decrease the confidence and devotion of students towards Dhamma, or would drive new students away from the path of Dhamma.

Everyone comes here to serve, not to build up egotism. An assistant teacher should never feel, "I am superior to all other students." You are not superior; you have been given a responsibility to serve in this way, and if tomorrow you are asked to serve in a different way, you will serve in that way. Understand that there are old students who are capable of teaching but for one reason or another they have not been appointed.

The old students should also be careful; on their part they should always have a feeling of respect towards those who have been appointed assistant teachers. When somebody sits on the

Dhamma seat they represent Dhamma, they represent your teacher; so showing them respect is respecting the Dhamma, respecting your teacher.

If both assistant teachers and students have this attitude, automatically the relationship will be harmonious. But perhaps an assistant teacher feels, "Everything must be done according to my orders," or the management or the Dhamma servers feel, "We don't care what the assistant teacher says, we will work as we like. Who is this person to give us advice?" If such attitudes develop, the atmosphere would be spoiled. It is very important that there be harmony. Everyone has to help each other to help the Dhamma help the students who have come here. No one should feel that they are superior or inferior. You are here simply to serve people.

The best way to serve people is to generate as much love and compassion as possible, and dissolve your ego as much as possible. This is not only in the students' interest, it is in your interest also. If you build your ego as you serve people, you have started to harm yourself in the name of Dhamma, in the name of serving others. One who cannot help oneself can never help others.

At the start of one or two of the centres there was a tussle between the assistant teachers and the management or trustees. That fire started, but soon it was extinguished; now don't repeat that bad example here. From the beginning make sure that there is no fire; only cordiality and goodwill should prevail.

Whenever there is a problem the management, trustees and assistant teachers should sit down in a cordial atmosphere and make a decision. If you can't make a decision because there is a difference of opinion, try to understand the others' point of view and then inform the teacher; let him take a decision. But don't run to the teacher for minor problems; you should be able to discuss things and settle them amongst yourselves.

Here is a little story: A bullock cart owner used to transport goods from one place to the other. This man had a small dog. When he travelled from one village to another, he trained the dog to walk under the bullock cart to avoid the sun's heat. Wherever they travelled, the farmer sat on the bullock cart but the dog walked below in the shade of the cart.

In time the small dog came to feel that he was carrying the entire burden of the cart, and he wondered why the farmer gave so much attention to the bullocks. He thought, "I am carrying the burden of this cart! Wherever we travel, it is over my back. More importance should be given to me!"

Actually, nobody is carrying the cart; the Dhamma is carrying the cart. Nobody should feel, "I am the most important person, it is only because of me that the centre functions properly. It is only because of me that the teaching is given, that Dhamma spreads." Come out of this madness!

Understand that you are simply a vehicle, a tool, and Dhamma is doing its job. If you had

not been given this responsibility, somebody else would have taken it and the work would go on. Dhamma is bound to spread now; the clock of Vipassana has struck. You have been given the opportunity to serve in one way or another, and this should not become a cause of inflating your ego.

A new centre has started and it should develop with the proper Dhamma atmosphere. It should be a source of inspiration not only to those who are on the path, but also to those who are not, so that they will be attracted and come to Dhamma. This is a great responsibility for all of you.

Certainly you all have good merits and *pāramīs* from the past, which is why you have come on the path of Dhamma and now have the opportunity to serve Dhamma. Make use of this opportunity to increase your *pāramīs* so that you draw nearer and nearer the final goal of liberation. Help yourself and help others.

May Dhamma grow. May Dhamma spread in its pristine purity.

May this first centre on the continent of Europe prove to be an ideal centre. May it be a source of peace and harmony to many—not only of the present, but also of future generations. May countless people benefit on this Dhamma land and come out of their misery.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
MARCH 1, 1989
OPENING ADDRESS

THE VESSEL OF DHAMMA

Messengers and servants of the Dhamma: You have assembled here from around the world to deepen your understanding of how to spread the Dhamma so that more and more people may come into contact with it and benefit from it. Whatever you discuss or plan here in the coming days, keep firmly in your minds the basic message imparted by the greatest messenger of Dhamma twenty-five centuries ago. That message explains not only what Dhamma is but also how it should be distributed. Every word of it is valuable to remember. It is a message of eternal relevance to all Dhamma messengers in all ages.

What ultimately is the volition with which to spread the Dhamma? What is the underlying purpose? Is it the wish to convert people to Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity or any other organized religion? On the contrary, that great messenger made clear the volition required. The Dhamma is to be spread *bahujana-hitāya, bahujana-sukhāya*—for the good and benefit of many, as many people as one is capable of serving!

And how is this service to be given? Again, the same message gives us the answer: *lokānukampāya*—with compassion for people, with selfless love and goodwill in one's heart. All servants and messengers of Dhamma must keep examining themselves to check that their service accords with this message, for egotism may make its onslaught in any person at any time. When it does, the recognition one gets and the prominence one is granted seem more important than the service rendered. This attitude is nothing but madness, all the more dangerous because it can be so subtle. For this reason one must constantly be on guard against its approach.

Of course personal material gain is out of the question, but certain forms of Dhamma service may sometimes lead to name and fame. Be careful not to let this become the attraction. Remember that you must work without expecting anything in return, with compassion for those whom you serve. They are most important, not those who give the service. The weaker your egotism and the greater your goodwill, the better you are fit to serve.

And what precisely is the service that you must seek to give? Again the master Teacher has explained: *desetha Dhammaṃ*—give the people Dhamma, nothing but Dhamma. Not the Dhamma of any organized religion, be it Buddhist, Hindu, Christian or Jain, but the Universal Law applicable to one and all.

One characteristic of the genuine Dhamma is that it confers benefits at every stage to those who practise it. As the Teacher said, it is *ādikalyāṇaṃ, majjhekalyāṇaṃ, pariyosana-kalyāṇaṃ*—beneficial in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. The first steps on the path yield positive results at once, and these increase as one goes further. When the final goal is reached, the benefits are limitless. Thus every step of the practice produces good. This is one important feature by which to recognize the true Dhamma.

Another characteristic is that the Dhamma is complete. Nothing need be added to it or removed from it to render it effective; it is *kevalaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ, kevalaṃ parisuddhaṃ*. The Dhamma is like a brimming vessel: Nothing more is required to fill it, and any addition will be at the sacrifice of what the vessel already contains.

Often the urge to add may be well-intentioned, in the hope of making the Dhamma more attractive to people of various backgrounds. "What harm is there in adding something which is itself good?" someone may ask. Understand: The harm is that the Dhamma will eventually be relegated to the background and forgotten. Additions may offer mundane benefits, but the goal of Dhamma is supra-mundane: liberation from suffering. Something may be harmless in itself but it becomes most dangerous if it causes us to lose sight of this goal.

Equally insidious are moves to abridge the Dhamma in any way. Again the intention may be good: to avoid offence to people who might find aspects of the teaching hard to accept. Against such urging we must recall that the Dhamma was not devised to suit any particular set of views; it is the Law of Nature rediscovered by the master Teacher 2,500 years ago. Every part of it is needed to lead on to the final goal. Omitting an aspect that some find controversial—whether *sīla, samādhi,* or *paññā*—may be a way to curry favour, but what is that worth if the efficacy of the Teaching is lost? We seek not popularity but liberation for ourselves and others.

Given a bowl of nectar, someone cries, "It is too sour!" Another says, "It would be sweeter with a little sugar." Very well, mix a little sugar with it; there is no harm in doing so. But if the next time the bowl is offered, more sugar is added, and more every time, eventually the taste of nectar will be lost. Then people will mix together sugar and water, and drink that mixture calling it nectar, and wonder why their thirst is not slaked. So with the nectar of the Dhamma: Imbibe it in its pure form, without any alteration, in order truly to benefit from it.

Words are only words; to attract others to the Dhamma, far more useful is the example you set by your way of life. Therefore the great Teacher said *brahmacariyaṃ pakāsetha*—be a shining example of the Dhamma by applying it yourself. This is the best way to encourage others to practise it.

Suppose you point with your finger in a particular direction and say, "This is the right path that all must follow to reach liberation. This is

the direct way to happiness." Before examining the path, people will first look at your finger. If it is stained with dirt or blood, what confidence can they have in the way to which you point? Develop purity in yourself if you wish to encourage others to follow the path of purification.

The teaching is extraordinary in its simplicity: A certain cause will produce a certain effect; to remove the effect, eliminate the cause. Reacting with craving to pleasant sensations or with aversion to unpleasant ones will immediately give rise to suffering. If, instead of reacting, one smilingly observes and understands the impermanence of the experience, then no suffering will arise. This is Dhamma, the Universal Law, applicable to all regardless of religion, sex, social group or nationality. It is this essence of Dhamma that we seek to offer to others in its pristine purity.

Keep to these fundamental principles of the Dhamma, and all the details of how to distribute it will naturally become clear.

As love and compassion are the proper bases for spreading the Dhamma, they must form the base for all your discussions during this meeting. When making a suggestion, be careful to present it humbly, without any attachment to your view. See that you speak with all the wisdom that you have. You may put forward a proposal up to three times, but if others still do not accept it, smile and drop it. Recognize that the Dhamma will take the course that is best for it, not necessarily the one that you with your limited understanding think is best.

Remember that an empty vessel has nothing to offer others. Therefore fill yourself with the Dhamma. Discover real peace and harmony within yourself, and naturally these will overflow to benefit others.

May you keep walking on the path for the good, happiness and liberation of many. May you be successful in your attempts to spread Dhamma, to spread peace and harmony.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
MARCH 3, 1989
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: It is said, "*Ātmā* is immortal." What happens to *ātmā* after *nirvāṇa*? If it does not exist after *nirvāṇa* then the belief that *ātmā* is immortal is wrong. Would you throw some light on this issue?

Goenkaji: Believing that *Ātmā* is immortal is a philosophical belief. First one has to believe that there is an *ātmā*, a soul, and then one has to believe that it is immortal. Both these beliefs are strongly interconnected. If *ātmā*, or the soul, is not immortal then *ātmā* is useless to me. I accept *ātmā* simply because somebody says that it is immortal, and by *ātmā* I understand it is "I." If somebody whispers in my ear, "Well look, everything is mortal, impermanent in this world, but you are permanent, you will always remain," I feel elated by this belief, "Wonderful, I will remain! Everything, the body, mind and the entire universe passes away, but I will remain!"

The tremendous amount of attachment that ignorance helps us develop to "I" is strengthened by this kind of belief. There is a reason behind the formation of all these philosophical beliefs. Our job is not to say, "No, it is wrong," to give reasons why, and get involved in debates and arguments—that won't help. Neither should we confirm the belief.

Leave it aside. All right, if the belief is that there is a soul that it is immortal, then let me investigate this belief. Vipassana is nothing but investigating the truth pertaining to oneself within the framework of the body. The first thing that you come across is your bodily structure. By Vipassana, as you keep moving from the gross to the subtle, to the subtlest, you will reach a stage where you will start experiencing every tiny subatomic particle which is arising and passing. And you will realize, "Well this is not *ātmā*, because *ātmā* is immortal and this is not immortal."

Similarly, you keep on observing the entire mental structure. As you observe from the gross to the subtle, to the subtlest, you will reach the stage where you will find that the mental structure is also nothing but wavelets arising and passing. By this experience you are investigating, like a scientist, what the truth is. When you reach the stage where the entire mind and matter phenomenon is just arising and passing—and in that whole process the impurities are eradicated—then a stage comes where you transcend the field of mind and matter and you experience something which is called *nibbāna,* where nothing arises, nothing passes away. You may say it is immortal. But when you reach that stage there will be no "I." That stage has to be experienced by each individual. Without that, again it will become just a philosophy.

Accept only the reality pertaining to the truth that you experience within the framework of the body and keep moving. The answer will come, Vipassana will help to supply this answer. ❧

Why is it important to sit two full hours every day?

As it is essential that you give material food to your body every day, a minimum of twice, to keep it healthy and strong, similarly you have to give some food to the mind to keep it healthy and strong. And with these two hours of sitting, you give food to the mind to make it strong and healthy. ❧

Everything in the world is impermanent. Yet certain principles contained in the scriptures and in the law of mathematics are always the same, such as two plus two makes four. Then how can everything be impermanent?

Yes, everything in the field of mind and matter is impermanent and this impermanence is permanent. It is permanently impermanent. Things keep on changing. So far as matter is concerned, it keeps on changing. So far as mind is concerned, it keeps on changing. The nature of change cannot be turned into a nature of non-change. It will always be changing.

There are four, basic, ultimate truths. One ultimate truth pertaining to matter; another ultimate truth pertaining to the mind; a third ultimate truth pertaining to the mental contents; and the fourth ultimate truth, the *nibbānic* stage. All of them are permanent. The first three are permanent in their nature of change. And the fourth is permanent in its nature of no change—there can't be any change. So everything is, in this respect, changing and non-changing.

Emphasis is given to that which constantly changes because out of our ignorance and madness we develop attachment to that which will change, and once it changes we become depressed. The attachment brings misery. For that purpose the whole teaching of Vipassana is to keep understanding that whatever is changing is permanently changing. This nature of change doesn't go away, but our attachment to it has to go away, otherwise we will suffer. Vipassana is for that purpose only, not to establish any philosophy. ❧

What is the value of attending group sittings?

Whenever a few people sit together, whatever they generate in their minds permeates the atmosphere. If five, ten, twenty, or fifty people meditate together, the vibrations of one or two amongst them might be good vibrations and it may help the others meditate better in that atmosphere. This is the reason. ❧

I still get a lot of pain even when I meditate at home. What should I do?

Meditate. What else can you do? Now you have a wonderful object with which you can take out all your habit patterns of aversion. Whenever you feel something unpleasant, the old habit of the mind is to react with aversion. Vipassana is to help you to come out of all such conditionings.

Your aversion towards unpleasant sensations cannot be eradicated unless you face them and change this habit pattern. So welcome all these objects which help you to come out of your old habit of aversion. The whole purpose of Vipassana is to change the habit pattern of the mind; neither have craving towards pleasant sensations nor aversion towards unpleasant

ones. When you have pleasant sensations observe them without attachment, without reaction, understanding they are *anicca*. Good, now unpleasant sensations have come; make use of them, work with Vipassana. ❧

and you can't feel your breath—make it a little harder. You can intentionally make this object a little more gross. Work with that; the mind becomes calm and you will reach a stage where you can again start working on the body. ❧

For a period after each course I can meditate okay. Then it becomes harder, so that I cannot even pass my attention through the body. What should I do?

Continue to work. Keep on fighting your battle. When you come to a Dhamma environment like this, the entire atmosphere is charged with vibrations which are anti-craving, anti-aversion, anti-ignorance. In this atmosphere you can work better, and you gain strength by your practice here. With that strength you have to face the world outside. After all, you have to live in the world. You can't live in a meditation centre all the time. You go to a hospital to gain health, not to live there. So gain strength here and then live in the world. After some time you may find that your meditation is again becoming weaker. Understand the reason: The whole atmosphere outside is charged with the vibrations of craving and aversion, and you are doing something which is anti-craving, anti-aversion. The outside atmosphere starts overpowering you and you become weaker. You have to keep on fighting.

For this fight you are given two tools in this technique. The first tool, Anapana, is specifically for that purpose. Whenever you find you have become so weak that you can't work with the body and bodily sensations, come back to Anapana. Breath is something which you can intentionally make harder. You work with it

If I am not able to experience subtle sensation in the body, how can I practise *mettā*?

It is true that if you practise *mettā* with these subtle sensations, it is very strong, very effective, because then you are working with the deepest level of your mind. If you are experiencing a gross sensation, that means only the surface level of your mind is working and the *mettā* is not that effective. But it doesn't matter. In this case just keep imagining at the intellectual, conscious level, "May all beings be happy. May all beings be happy." And keep on working. When you reach the stage where there are subtle vibrations, you will work at a deeper level and the *mettā* will be more effective. ❧

How can a meditator deal with grief over the death of a loved one?

A meditator should be very wise and understand the law of nature. In spite of all your crying and prayers, there is no possibility that this person will come back. You have to accept the fact that this person has gone forever.

Understand that whenever you generate a vibration of sorrow and misery while remembering someone who has passed away, the vibrations will reach wherever this person may be, and will make him or her unhappy. No-one wants a near and dear one who has passed

away to be unhappy. We would certainly like the person to be happy, peaceful and liberated, yet you send vibrations to this person which will make him or her more unhappy. You are harming the person whom you want to be happy.

Another harmful aspect is that while you are crying, remembering the near and dear one who has passed away, you are sowing seeds of *saṅkhāras* of misery. You are becoming miserable and a seed of misery will bring nothing but misery in the future. Nature will not differentiate whether you are sowing the seed because of this or that logical reason. No, the seed is of misery and it must bring misery.

After all, what is a seed? A seed generates and creates a habit pattern of the mind. And now you are supporting the habit pattern of the mind by becoming more miserable, due to this or that reason. This habit pattern will bring more misery in the future; so you have started harming yourself and the dear one who is gone.

And the third harmful aspect is that this sensation of misery that you are generating by this *saṅkhāra* starts permeating the atmosphere around you. Everyone else in the family around you will become depressed, because you are generating that type of sensation. You have started harming yourself, those around you who are alive, and the dear one who has passed away. This action of yours is harmful in three ways.

If somebody works wisely and understands the law of nature, then as soon as you remember the one who has passed away, if even slight sorrow starts in the mind, you immediately calm down and start generating vibrations of *mettā*, love, "May you be happy, wherever you are. May you be happy, may you be peaceful, may you be liberated." Your vibrations will reach this being and he or she will feel happy. These vibrations are full of happiness, peace, harmony. You are generating a *saṅkhāra* at that time of harmony and peace. This seed will bring fruit to you of peace, harmony and happiness. And this vibration will permeate the atmosphere and make it peaceful and harmonious. You have started helping all three—the loved one who has died, yourself, and your family—in the proper way, in a Dhamma way.

Vibrations do work. Even to those who have passed away, wherever they may be, the vibration that we generate whilst remembering them will certainly reach there, strongly or mildly, according to the strength of your mind.

Many times in your own life you will find that, although there is no reason, nothing has happened outside, you start feeling depressed. Certain vibrations from outside are coming in contact with you. A vibration of depression makes you depressed. Similarly often you will find that, without any reason, although nothing has happened outside, you feel happy. Certain good vibrations of happiness are reaching you. This is the law of nature. If you are near a burning oven, its vibrations will bring you heat. If you are near a refrigerator, the vibrations will bring you coldness. The earlier one understands the law of nature and starts applying it in this life, the better. So this is the best way to act at that time. ❧

We have young children and it is very difficult to find time to meditate. What should I do?

A householder is bound to face such difficulties. But if you wait for the time when there are no hindrances, you will not meditate for your whole life. For a woman, motherhood is good. And if you have children, you have the responsibility to look after them—very good. Along with the responsibility of looking after the child, you must find time to meditate. When the child is asleep, meditate. The child has awakened: all right, again start nursing the child. In this way, even if you don't get a fixed time or place, it doesn't matter, do it in intervals. But meditate, don't stop. ❧

At what age could I start to teach my child to meditate?

Before birth. Meditation should be taught when the child is growing in the womb. The child needs good vibrations while in the womb, so practise Vipassana. Every pregnant mother should practise more Vipassana because then you are helping two beings simultaneously. You are helping yourself, and you are helping the being which has not yet come out. Help them.

After that, when the child grows to five or six you can start teaching Anapana. Just be aware of the respiration for a few minutes; two, three, five minutes, enough. Don't push too much. A few minutes of awareness of respiration, and then say; "All right, play." After that, again a few minutes of respiration. So it will become like playing for the child. Later on, as he or she grows, increase the time. In this way you start giving the seed of Dhamma, and the child develops in an atmosphere of Dhamma. ❧

You have started giving training in Anapana in some schools. How will this training benefit children?

Actually the entire teaching has only one purpose: One should live peacefully and harmoniously in accordance with the law of nature—not harming oneself or others. Now this art of living is difficult to learn in old age, so the training should start at a young age. In the schools children should learn the art of living a healthy life. Their entire life is ahead of them.

You start by teaching them how to control their minds. Along with this awareness of respiration it is explained that you have to live a moral life, so they understand, "I must not kill, I must not steal, etc. But how can I abstain from that? I must have control over my mind. And look, this helps." The object that is given is universal so a student from any caste, any community, any religion can work on this.

You also tell them that they can develop in this awareness of respiration and then they will live a good life. At further stages they can purify their minds to such an extent that they will live a perfect life, so there is a goal. In school for example, when they learn the alphabet the goal is that they will become very learned people later on. Now they have started with this base of *sīla* and respiration. ❧

Do you think that by this training children can become good citizens?

What is a good citizen? A good citizen is one who does not harm himself or herself and also does not harm other members of society. The whole teaching shows how to live a life of morality. If children start learning this in childhood, when they become adults they will naturally live healthy, good lives. This is how they will become good citizens. ❧

Why is there segregation of sexes on a course?

This would not have been necessary if we were working with other types of meditation which impose a good layer at the surface of the mind, making you forget everything that is deep inside.

But this technique is totally different. From the very beginning it starts an operation of the mind, taking out the impurities from the deepest level. When you operate on a wound, only pus will come out; you can't expect rose water to come out. What is the pus of the mind? Now the worst pus that you have is sexual passion. The entire *loka* in which you are living is called *kāma-loka*, the *loka* where sexual passion is predominant. Even at the apparent level your birth is because of the sexual contact of your parents. The base of sexual passion is deep inside. And if sexual passion comes on the surface, it becomes stronger for a male when he is in contact with the vibration of a female. When a female develops passion, it is strengthened by contact with the vibrations of a male. And if you remain intermingled while you are doing this operation, it is dangerous. It will harm you. Instead of your coming out of passion, there is every possibility that you will multiply passion. So better remain separated as much as possible. It is essential. ❧

We have found that foreigners benefit more than Indians from Vipassana meditation. Comparatively they seem to be more disciplined and sincere. Even in service they are more sincere, selfless and prepared to serve in any section. Why is it so?

The teaching of Dhamma is the same for all, but you don't work! So examine yourselves: Why don't you work? The difficulty is that you are all involved in mad games of philosophical beliefs, "There is a soul, there is a god, I believe in this." All that becomes a big obstacle. And these people more or less have come out of that madness. They think, "I am here to learn a technique which will purify my mind and make me a good person." So they work.

Or, you have all these bondages, "I am a very conservative Hindu"... "I am a very strict Jain. I can't get converted to this." Through Vipassana you are not converted to Buddhism, you are converted to Dhamma. Still this question keeps coming in your mind. If you can't come out of these bondages, you can't be helped. Come out of the bondages! Understand Dhamma is universal. It is simply an art of living: how to develop control over the mind and how to purify the mind so that we live a healthy life. Once you understand that, you will work more. Then all those qualities that you have mentioned about the Westerners are bound to come to you also, nature will not discriminate. ❧

Why is drinking only one glass of wine a breakage of *sīla*?

One glass becomes more. So why not come out it from the very beginning?

Once one becomes addicted, it is so difficult to come out of the addiction. Why not refrain from anything that is addictive?

Another important reason is that if someone who has come out of all kinds of intoxicants and is progressing in meditation takes even a very small quantity of alcohol, that person will immediately feel that it creates agitation and will feel unhappy. They can't take it.

Understand, with the experience of so many who have progressed, that this goes against Dhamma, against the purification of the mind. Ignorance causes impurities to develop and intoxicants are closely associated with ignorance. They drown all your understanding. Come out of them as quickly as possible. ❧

Was it necessary for Lord Buddha to practise meditation even after enlightenment?

Yes, it was necessary. Even when one becomes a *buddha,* it does not mean that the law of nature will start favouring this person. The law of nature of this body is that it is decaying, dying. The body requires strength, and when a *buddha* goes in this meditative state of *nibbāna* and comes out, he finds that the whole body has become healthier. It helps, he can work much more.

There is so much work for the body of one who works all the twenty-four hours, except for two or two-and-a-half hours when he lies down. Some rest is needed. The mind is peaceful, but to rest the body the mind has to go to the depth and reach the *nibbānic* stage. When one comes out of the *nibbānic* experience one is physically refreshed. ❧

Most organizations, as they become larger, are preoccupied with their own growth and expansion. How can we protect our Dhamma organization from making this mistake?

The cause of the problem is included in the question. When these organizations work for their own expansion, they have already started rotting. The aim should be to increase other people's benefits. Then there is a pure Dhamma volition and there is no chance of decay.

When there is a Dhamma volition, "May more and more people benefit," there is no attachment. But if you want your organization to grow, there is attachment and that pollutes Dhamma. ❧

Apparently during Buddha's time, there was no secret about the attainment of serious meditators. But in our organization, attainments are not discussed openly. Why not use these to inspire beginners?

The actual attainment, is to reach the stage of *arahant*. Become *arahants,* and I will announce loudly, "Look, one of my students has become an *arahant*! Come, come all of you!" Unless you become an *arahant*, then what can I announce? [Laughter]

Now the biggest attraction is that your way of life is changing. If you are a better person, certainly you are getting strengthened in Dhamma. That is good enough. ❧

In India there are many types of religious practices, social customs and caste. In these conditions how can Vipassana be helpful?

Vipassana is the only way to help in such a situation. In all these sects, communities, beliefs, dogmas, rites, and rituals, there is something universal: the goal of purifying the mind to such an extent that you will not harm yourself or others. Now one may belong to any community or belief, but everyone can accept this easily.

An example: A large number of Christian priests and nuns come to courses and some have said, "You are teaching Christianity in the name of Buddha." Everyone wants the mind to become pure. Similarly, whether one is a Jain or a Hindu or anything else, if one starts doing Vipassana, one finds it is universal and good for all. These differences will all be immaterial for people who start working in Vipassana. And this will give a unity to the country, a unity to all humanity. It is a very positive thing to do. ❧

You say that we should not come to Vipassana to cure a disease. However, we see that many ailing people have found benefit. Why do you discourage this?

We don't discourage people from coming out of their illness. But the goal should be very clear: Vipassana is to purify the mind so that the mind is free from all illnesses.

If the goal is only to come out of a certain disease, your motivation is wrong and you won't work properly; all the time your attention will be towards your illness. When your attention is not on the object on which you should be working, you can't benefit. You will attain neither this nor that.

The aim is to come out of all the illnesses of life which make us unhappy. Yes, when the mind is purified, all psychosomatic diseases will have to go, they can't remain, but we don't say that physical diseases will also be cured. Some may indeed be cured, but the goal is to purify the mind. ❧

Can non-householders be allowed during the Vipassana course to do some of the compulsory daily practices of their own religion for a short period—like *sāmāyika, pratikramaṇa, sandhyā,* etc.?

This would be harmful. Understand: The names of practices that are used here—*sāmāyika, pratikramaṇa, kāyotsarga, sandhyā*—are all words of pure Dhamma, of Vipassana. But today the essence is lost; it is just a lifeless shell which they are performing.

For example: At the source of the Ganges the water is so pure, but it gets dirtier as the river descends. By the time it reaches the sea the water is so polluted you cannot drink it or even wash clothes in it. Now the same thing is found in Dhamma: It starts with such crystal purity, but as it descends all sorts of pollution comes in, and then it is of no use.

Dhamma must be kept in its purity. Such people who perform these rites and rituals must be made to understand what their rite is.

One word that is used is *sāmāyika*. The literal meaning of this is that the mind becomes equanimous. What do they do for this *sāmāyika*?

They sit and repeat a set formula for forty-eight minutes. Now you sit here for one hour so you have given more *sāmāyika*, as far as the time is concerned.

But in those forty-eight minutes they repeat a certain formula without understanding that this is done by the surface of the mind, the conscious part of the mind. By diverting the mind to an object—the recitation of a certain word—one feels that the mind is becoming equanimous. Which part of the mind? Just the surface of the mind. The totality of the mind must become equanimous and then it is *sāmāyika*.

The entire mass of the mind is agitated all the time. Even though the surface has become calm, deep inside there is agitation—craving and aversion. From the very beginning Vipassana helps you to work at that depth, and make the deepest level of the mind equanimous. When people understand that Vipassana is nothing but *sāmāyika*, the trouble goes away. Attachment to rites, rituals, ceremonies, your particular formula—all that is the pollution of the Ganges water.

Similarly, another word—*kāyotsarga*—means to eradicate attachment towards this body. Now what do you do? Again you sit down and start reciting a set formula. At the conscious level you recite that formula and feel that you are doing *kāyotsarga*.

Vipassana takes you to the stage where you don't have attachment to even the tiniest particle of your body. It becomes so clear: Vipassana is *kāyotsarga*.

Similarly for *pratikramaṇa*. The word *pratikramaṇa* means to come back. Now you sit down for some time and remember, "Today I did these unwholesome actions at the physical, mental and vocal levels. Oh, it was bad. In future I won't do these." It is good, but which part of the mind is doing that? Again, only the surface of the mind.

Deep at the unconscious level, you are making the same mistakes which you want to rectify. Craving and aversion are there; these are the roots. If you can't take these out, all purification of the mind at the surface level is not really *pratikramaṇa*, which is to come back to the original state of purity.

The Enlightened One said that the mind by itself is pure: Keep away the impurities, and it is pure. When the mind is in its natural, pure nature, if suddenly an unpleasant sensation arises and it makes the mistake of developing aversion towards this, then it has gone out of its own limit—*atikramaṇa*. You remember, "Oh, it has gone beyond its limit. Bring it back within the boundary where there is no aversion. Oh it has gone towards craving. Bring it back within the boundary where there is no craving." That is *pratikramaṇa*. And this is what you are doing in Vipassana. If we encourage people, saying, "All right, because you have taken a vow, carry on," then we are harming them.

Another word used is *sandhyā*. One literal meaning is that the day and night join together. A deeper meaning is *samyak-dhyāna*, to meditate in a proper way. The proper way means your entire mind should get concentrated with purity; this is *sandhyā*. And what is being done now? In the name of *sandhyā* you recite certain mantras for a few minutes; and you have finished your job. Vipassana gives you *samyak-dhyāna*, the real *sandhyā*. People who are involved in rites and rituals will understand all

this provided you tell them, "Work on this. Suspend judgement for ten days. If you keep on doing your rites you won't understand what is being taught here."

I have come across a few cases where people practise Vipassana for some time and also follow their own rites and rituals. When some benefit comes due to the practice of Vipassana, they think, "This benefit came because of my rite. I am so perfect in my rites and rituals." They don't understand that the benefit is a hundred per cent because of Vipassana. Your rites, rituals, and fasting are meaningless. Only if you leave them aside and then try, can you give a real evaluation of Dhamma.

Then the question comes that during the course somebody might do these rites. Well, if he has worked with all his rites and rituals and gone away, what can we do? Even if you find out later on, we don't have any stick to run after him. He or she has missed the full advantage of Vipassana.

But if one comes to know that a particular student is continuing to practise all those rites and rituals during a course, then very compassionately tell them, "No, it is harmful. You have to stop it. You have taken a vow not to mix up things, at least for these ten days. Don't do it." In spite of repeated warnings if someone doesn't agree, then very compassionately ask these people to leave. You must be very strict. There is compassion in this discipline. You are strict to help others, not to please yourself. With great compassion be strict.

Can they continue Vipassana along with their rites and rituals after leaving the course?

If they start understanding, "This is an empty shell, and Vipassana is the real essence, yet I can't let go of the empty shell," then at least they should keep the two apart. Do these rites and rituals, then leave a gap and do Vipassana later. They can continue like that, although it is not healthy. But as they grow they have to come out of these rites and rituals. Rites and rituals can't go together with Vipassana. ❧

What is the measure of a *sotāpanna*? How do we know that a person has attained this stage?

There are certain criteria. The most important thing is that one has experienced the *nibbānic* stage, maybe only for a few moments.

Now how can one check whether this person has experienced *nibbāna* or not? There are certain directions given to a teacher, and some experience also, by which one checks whether somebody is in the *nibbānic* stage. Someone might have a very deep experience of peace, and feel, "That was an experience of *nibbāna*." But the teacher was not there, or the teacher is not experienced enough to check whether it really was *nibbāna*.

If someone really has experienced *nibbāna,* the way of life must change. One must be a better person than before. Certain things must be totally eradicated from the mind. One thing that is totally eradicated is doubt, scepticism. So long as one has not travelled the entire path, there is bound to be some kind of doubt: "Am I on the right path? Maybe something is wrong." But once you have covered the entire path and gone beyond this mind-and-matter phenomenon, and experienced *nibbāna* if only for a moment, how can there be doubt? This is one yardstick by which one can measure whether one has become *sotāpanna*.

Another aspect is that during the beginning steps of Dhamma people start working to extremes, thinking, "By this extreme I will get liberated." This madness automatically goes away because one has worked with the Middle Path and reached the goal. One realizes, "Oh, those extremes are useless. They are actually a hindrance in my progress." Such a person will never go to such extremes but will get more and more perfect on the Middle Path. Thus there are two or three criteria which manifest. ❧

Why is it harmful to mix techniques?

Every rite, ritual or ceremony is nothing but a corrupt form of pure Dhamma. If people keep this corrupt thing along with the purity of Vipassana, the rituals will again become predominant in their mind, "That is more important. I am a traditional Jain, Hindu, Buddhist, so that must be there." They can't get the real benefit of Vipassana.

Another reason is that from one enlightened person to another there is a big gap. During that gap the technique disappears, but the words somehow remain, though the real meaning is lost. And without practice even pure Dhamma taught by an enlightened person will slowly become a sect.

For the head of a sect, the number of followers is important and the aim is to increase this number. Whether people get real benefit or not is unimportant to him. If one of the followers asks for a technique, he will explain the words that remain in his own way, and give a technique without understanding the real meaning of those words. His wish is to keep the followers happy within his sect. And now that starts and people get very attached, "This is given by our wonderful *ācariya* who is definitely in contact with an enlightened person, so what he says is perfectly all right."

Dhamma becomes polluted because things are started by these people who know nothing of how to purify the mind at the depth. They find some formula here or there, and start these things. If these are added to Vipassana it will get polluted. Then the efficacy of this pure Dhamma will definitely be lost.

Now what will be added? If somebody wants to calm the mind, he will be told, "All right, you'd better recite this word." And the word given is the name of the one who started this particular sect, "...because he is an enlightened person." So every sect will repeat a particular name. Now, one becomes calm because this word is repeated. They think, "Ah, our tradition is wonderful. It gives such peace." But they have missed the real essence of Dhamma.

What is Dhamma? The purpose is to come out of the wheel, the process of birth and death. Every time you generate a *saṅkhāra* by reacting to a pleasant or unpleasant sensation, you are giving a push to this wheel. If you don't reach that place where craving and aversion originate and instead you work at the surface level, then the process of multiplying your misery, your craving and aversion, goes on. When you recite a word only the surface level of your mind is reciting. Deep inside the whole process is the same.

Now if you add this to Vipassana, what happens? Every word has its own vibration, and if

you keep on reciting the same word your entire body gets engulfed in the vibration that you have created. It is good at the surface level; it works like a shield so that no bad vibration can enter. But you have forgotten to work with your own vibration.

The technique of Vipassana is to change the habit pattern at the deepest level of the mind. When you are repeating a word you are not changing the habit pattern, because you don't know what vibrations there are when something is either pleasant or unpleasant. You don't know how you are reacting to the natural vibrations which keep on working deep inside your body and mind. You have just put up a good shield of created, artificial vibrations. You have created a hindrance for yourself.

What other kinds of pollution are there? You can sit down and imagine something, and your mind gets concentrated with this image. Now how will you reach the stage where you observe craving and aversion arising at the deepest level? You have diverted your conscious mind to an imagined object, and forgotten all about your unconscious mind.

There is another difficulty: The whole technique is to examine the reality within yourself by disintegrating the entire mind-and-matter phenomenon. Only then can you reach the stage which is beyond mind and matter. And now you are creating another illusion, an imaginary shape which is integrated, and you don't do anything to disintegrate this. How can you come out of ignorance? All this integrated reality is ignorance, it makes you feel that this is "I, mine." Only when that gets disintegrated and dissolved can you understand it is all subatomic particles, wavelets, vibrations. When you reach that stage you find that the entire mind-matter structure is essenceless.

So those who understand Dhamma properly must be careful. You should not add anything simply to please the followers of traditional beliefs or philosophies.

The Dhamma is so complete; there is nothing to add—*kevalaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ*. It is *parisuddhaṃ*, that is, there is no question of taking out anything. Keep it *paripuṇṇa* and *parisuddha* and you will get all the benefits. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
MARCH 4, 1989
CLOSING ADDRESS

HOW DHAMMA WILL SPREAD

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

It is now nearly twenty years since a great responsibility was placed on my shoulders by my Dhamma father, Sayagyi U Ba Khin. When I review this work of *Dhamma-dūta* it is astonishing to see the fruits of Dhamma, to see how Dhamma is growing. Twenty years ago this technique was new to the country, and the Teacher was unknown, yet thousands of people started coming to the courses.

But the bigger wonder was the way these Dhamma servers started serving, taking such pains to help others to learn Vipassana. In those non-centre camps held in places without proper facilities, the servers faced so much discomfort, so many inconveniences, and yet they gave such selfless service, with so much love and compassion.

When centres started being built it looked as if the facilities would make it easier for the management, but now the problems are merely of a different nature. New structures keep coming up, and whatever has been built needs repair and maintenance.

Whether one is a Dhamma server or an assistant teacher, all are householders and each one has some responsibility towards family and livelihood, yet they spare so much time and suffer so many inconveniences. It is unbelievable! Nobody even thinks of monetary gain, and they train themselves to understand that the respect given to them is actually given to Dhamma, that they are simply representatives of Dhamma.

In spite of all the discomforts, the servers feel so delighted, "Look, so many people are receiving Dhamma!" Besides this delight, what else do they receive? The Teacher inherited from his Dhamma father a quality of very strict discipline and sometimes he uses hard words. The servers give so much selfless service and in return they are given reprimands: "You did like this? You useless fellow! Why did you do that?" This is what they are given from their Dhamma father and from others! Nobody thanks them for the service they give.

It would be very easy for someone to say, "Forget all this! Let this teacher do his own work, why should I spend my time here? And all these ungrateful fellows, why should I spend my time on them?" But no, they still carry on in spite of all the criticism.

There is a good reason behind that. We do not know how many lives in the past we have performed meritorious deeds together. Gaining merits together brings people together in fu-

ture lives, to again perform meritorious deeds. Or, in so many past lives we would have meditated together and this brings us together to meditate again.

So it is not that somebody has only received Dhamma recently in a ten-day course, and has appreciated Dhamma so much that this person feels like serving. Oh, no! Of course that is the immediate cause, but the greater cause is the work we have done together in different lives. Having tasted Dhamma in one way or the other in the past, this person feels, "May more and more people come in contact with Dhamma and come out of their misery."

During many lives one has understood *sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*—giving Dhamma is the highest *dāna*—and this becomes clearer every time we serve. One can work hard and donate millions, building different kinds of facilities for others—this is good because people benefit, don't stop this. But when one compares the *dāna* of Dhamma, one finds there is no comparison.

Ups and downs are bound to come in life and if someone can face all that smilingly, oh, that is the biggest gift that can be given to anyone! This gift of Dhamma is not only made by the Teacher or the assistant teachers, but by all those who are serving.

Although the work done in the last twenty years is satisfactory, still so much more has to be done. When misery is so great, Dhamma has to arise. When there is so much darkness, light is needed, Dhamma is needed.

I see brightness for the future. Not only because of the present group of people who work so selflessly, but for generations those with good *pāramīs* from the past will take up the job, and the wheel of Dhamma will keep on rotating.

There is a danger to the rotation of the wheel of Dhamma if people make it a livelihood. How could this be Dhamma? You are expecting something in return. The danger also exists if mad people serve who crave only for position, power, or status. Then again Dhamma will not be Dhamma because there is no purity. Another danger is that someone will add something to Dhamma merely to please a particular group or sect. When an ignorant person starts doing that it will be a great danger signal for the rotation of the wheel of Dhamma. There is nothing to be added, nothing to be taken out. Dhamma is absolutely pure, absolutely complete—*kevalaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ, kevalaṃ parisuddhaṃ*.

Those who are giving service should remember that Dhamma is not spreading because of them, but because it is the time for Dhamma to spread. They are just vehicles, and should feel so pleased to be a vehicle. Because of this they are gaining wonderful *pāramīs*, wonderful *paññā* and developing their own meditation. This is not an ordinary gain.

A large number of suffering people have some unwholesome *saṅkhāras* accumulated in the past which have brought so much misery to them, but many also have some very good *saṅkhāras*, and the time has arisen now that the fruit of their wholesome *saṅkhāra* should come up as the Dhamma. Then who are you or I to

give them Dhamma? They are receiving Dhamma because of their good *karmas* of the past. We are just vehicles, that is all.

I keep on telling the story of the puppy walking under the bullock cart thinking, "I am carrying the entire burden of this bullock cart! That trader gives so much importance to those two bullocks, but over them is only the weight of the yoke. Over me is the weight of the whole bullock cart!" A mad puppy.

Nobody who serves Dhamma should think like that puppy. You should feel, "It is Dhamma that is working, and I have a wonderful shelter, I am in the shadow of Dhamma. Good!"

Keep remembering this couplet, a *dohā* by a great saint of this country, Kabir: *Kabira kharā bāzārameṅ, liye kuḷhārā hātha. Ṣiśa utāre, bhuīṅ dhare cale hamāre sātha*.
Kabīr says, "I am here calling you, but I have an axe in my hand. Only one who is ready to chop off his head and throw it in the dust can come with me." This is the prerequisite: Cut off your head, cut off all the ego, and then come. Yes, it will be wonderful for you and for all others who practise Dhamma. And I am sure that not only now, but for generations there will be people coming up who will have their heads chopped off, who will not work for ego. Then Dhamma will remain pure.

I am sure that a large number will benefit—those who serve and also those who are served. Dhamma works both ways: It is good for you and good for others, beneficial for you, beneficial for others.

May Dhamma grow. Keep on enjoying Dhamma by growing in Dhamma, under the shelter of Dhamma. May Dhamma grow, so that more and more suffering people round the world grow under the shelter of Dhamma, and come out of their misery. May Dhamma spread for the good of many, for the liberation of many.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

DHAMMA HOUSE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.
AUGUST 26, 1989

THE ESSENCE OF DHAMMA

Dear members of our Dhamma family:

You are all old students who wish to become established in Vipassana, progress on the path and enjoy the best fruits of Dhamma. To progress on the path of Dhamma it is absolutely essential that you practise Dhamma, and to practise Dhamma it is essential that you understand Dhamma.

If you do not practise Dhamma and merely develop attachment to it—taking it as a dogma, a cult or an organized religion—then Dhamma is no longer Dhamma for you. When you understand Dhamma in its true nature, the deep essence of Dhamma, then the outer shell has no importance.

To understand what Dhamma is you have to understand what *sīla* is and why it should be practised; you have to understand what *sammā-samādhi* is and why this type of *samādhi* should be practised; you have to understand what real *paññā* is and why it should be practised.

The Buddha made people understand at the experiential level why they should observe *sīla*, and then gave them the ability to really observe *sīla*. At the intellectual level one may understand, "I should not do this, it is unwholesome. I should do that, it is wholesome." And yet in daily life we keep performing unwholesome actions. One of the ancient scriptures points this out, saying:

Jānāmi dharmaṃ na ca me pravṛitti,
Jānāmi adharmaṃ na ca me nivṛitti.
I know very well what is dharma and yet I cannot follow it.
I know very well what is contrary to dharma, and yet I cannot abstain from it.

Someone who becomes a Buddha discovers a way for people to abstain from unwholesome actions. He makes people realise what actually happens when you kill somebody, steal, commit adultery, lie, or consume alcohol or drugs.

Going deep inside, you start to understand, "I cannot kill anybody unless I generate negativity in my mind—anger, hatred, ill will, animosity, some negativity or the other." And you also realise, "As soon as I generate negativity in my mind, nature starts punishing me. I become miserable then and there." Realising this universal truth the Buddha said,

Idha tappati, pecca tappati
You start suffering now and you continue to suffer in the future.

The seed of the unwholesome action that you have planted makes you suffer here and now, and it will grow and give very bitter fruit.

The Buddha gave a simile: If you take a rope and twist it repeatedly the rope will become tighter and tighter. Every time you break *sīla* you twist that rope further, and you become

tense deep inside. The tendency to react in the same way becomes a habit, and you twist it again and again; thus your misery continues to grow. He said that, quite possibly, at the surface level of the mind you don't know that you are creating tension inside. How does it happen that you are unaware of this?

If you look at a burning ember covered by a thick layer of ash it appears as if the charcoal is not burning, as if there is no fire. In the same way, ninety-nine percent of your mind is burning and the one percent at the surface might be distracted by enjoying this or that sensual pleasure. Because you have not seen inside you do not know that you are burning.

Every time you break *sīla* you justify it, and at the surface level you feel perfectly all right. You say to yourself, "I killed that fellow because he was bad." Or you may say, "Why should he have that? What was wrong with my taking it? I'm quite happy now." Or else you say, "I had sexual relations but I didn't harm anybody; it was not a rape, we both consented. What is wrong with that?" Or again you say, "I took only a little glass of wine and I didn't get intoxicated. What was wrong with that? After all, when I'm in society somebody offers me a glass of wine and by accepting it I am not disturbing the peace and harmony of society, I am helping it. Everybody's happy."

A Buddha will smile and say, "Mad fellows. They are happy with the layer of ash covering the truth. They don't know that they are burning deep inside and that they keep giving fuel to this burning." Every time you break any *sīla* you are giving more and more fuel to this fire and you become more and more miserable. This cannot be understood by arguments or discussions. Only when you go deeper can you realize that every vocal or physical action that breaks the law of nature simultaneously causes harm to yourself.

When you go deeper you also see that as you start performing wholesome actions, either physical or vocal, the fire burning inside dies down and you start feeling peaceful. The Buddha said, *Idha nandati, pecca nandati, katapuñño ubayattha nandati*. Because you are cultivating a mental habit pattern of generating peace, harmony, and real happiness, this mental state continues. All actions, either physical or vocal, made with the base of a pure mind cause happiness—not the happiness of that small layer of ash covering a burning ember, but happiness at the depth of the mind.

Samādhi is concentration. How should you concentrate? And why should you concentrate in this particular way? This was the enlightenment of the Buddha: *Sammā-samādhi* must be a *samādhi* that leads us to *paññā*, and its object must be the reality pertaining to your own body and mind.

The Buddha called what is known in the West as the conscious mind the *paritta citta*, meaning a tiny part of the mind. Actually the entire mind is conscious; no part is unconscious or half-conscious. The parts of the mind called the unconscious or the half-conscious keep feeling the sensations on the body and reacting to them. The surface part of the mind is like the layer of ash covering the burning ember: You can play with this and put some ice there so that you feel as if the burning has ceased and that you are perfectly happy. If you meditate

using verbalization, it is only the conscious mind that is verbalizing; the deep unconscious has nothing to do with it. Likewise it is the tiny part of the mind, the "conscious mind" that visualizes, or imagines, or gives some suggestion, or plays some intellectual or emotional games. The mind deep inside has nothing to do with all this, and yet you feel as if you are peaceful.

When you go to a cinema, bar or theatre, you divert your agitated conscious mind and enjoy sensual pleasures. When you intoxicate your conscious mind with alcohol or drugs, again you forget your misery for some time. In the same way, when you intoxicate your mind with different kinds of meditation, you forget your misery. You forget the red-hot charcoal that is burning deep inside.

The enlightenment of the Buddha was to go to the depth and understand the law of cause and effect. He understood that whenever one reacts with craving or aversion, misery follows; this is the law of nature. He investigated why one reacts in this way.

At the apparent level it feels as if you react to things outside. Whatever you see, hear, smell, taste, touch or think that is pleasant, it seems that you react to that sensory contact with craving. Similarly whatever unpleasant contact you have at any of the sense doors, it seems that you react to it with aversion. That is true, but only at the surface level. There is a missing link that you cannot understand without practising Vipassana. You do not react to the external objects coming in contact with the respective sense doors; you react to the sensations within your body caused by the contact. When the sensation is pleasant, you react with craving; when the sensation is unpleasant, you react with aversion. If this link is missing you are not working at the depth of your mind, you are simply working at the surface.

People who work only with the conscious mind fool themselves, and it doesn't actually help them. You have to go to the depth, limit your attention to your own mind-and-matter phenomenon, and observe the interaction taking place there. The "unconscious mind" deep inside is constantly in contact with the bodily sensations. Mind and matter are so interrelated that every moment anything that happens in the mind influences the body, and anything that happens at the material level influences the mind.

The Buddha was the first person in this era (there were many Buddhas before who had discovered the same thing) to find out this truth, and with compassion and goodwill to place it before people, "Look, this is the law. Understand this law with your own experience, and come out of your misery."

Someone might forget this truth and say, "Whether I go to this or that teacher the meditation is the same." I would reply, "If the guru teaches you to feel bodily sensations and develop equanimity towards them, then it is the same. It doesn't matter whether it is called Vipassana or not, whether it is the teaching of the Buddha or anyone else." But if the guru does not teach you to work like this, and still you say, "His teaching is the same," you are harming yourself because you are forgetting your bodily sensations, to which you keep reacting with craving and aversion.

This ash that covers the truth inside must be removed. Any object of meditation that helps this ash to grow is not a useful object of meditation; any object of meditation that removes the ash and makes us feel the misery inside is helpful.

This is the first noble truth, "Look how much burning is going on, how much tension there is." This can only be experienced when you start feeling sensations within the body. Every bodily sensation is a misery because out of ignorance you react and generate suffering. How can this be stopped? How can the mind that is so enslaved by this habit pattern be freed from slavery?

It can only be done by practice; intellectual discussions, debates, or accepting the truth at the devotional level will not help. These can give us guidance and show us how we should work, but then we actually have to work. Those who want to progress on the path of Dhamma have to understand what Vipassana meditators are doing and the real reason why we work in this way.

Of course you should not despise others. Those who teach meditation techniques that work only at the intellectual level are also helping people; at least the conscious mind is purified to some extent and this is helpful. But for your own work understand that liberation will only come when you go to the deep root of the cause of misery. Unless you eradicate the root of the misery, you can't eradicate your misery.

Dhamma is so simple and yet people have made it so complicated. There cannot be anything simpler than Dhamma. It has been made complicated by adding this or that philosophy, this or that belief. Just practise; don't make it complicated. Those who have made it complicated have harmed themselves and harmed others. You have the true path but it's a long path. To change the habit pattern of the mind takes time; but a beginning has been made. Even if you have taken one course, a good beginning has been made. Make use of this and start to decondition the mind at the deepest level.

As you go deeper in your meditation while practising all the five *sīlas*, you will start understanding that any breakage of *sīla* increases the ash on the surface of the mind, and simultaneously increases the burning inside. So realize the truth of burning, the misery within. Don't be deluded by this surface ash, by this small part of the so-called conscious mind.

Also understand that only by practising Dhamma can you benefit from Dhamma. If you take one course but do not practise every day you will be helped, but only to a small extent. Or if you take one course every year but you don't practise daily, the habit pattern of your mind cannot be changed; and that blind habit pattern has to be changed. Every time you meditate you change this habit pattern little by little, you decondition your mind little by little until you reach the stage where the mind is totally unconditioned; all the past habit patterns evaporate.

For this, you have to work seriously. You have this wonderful facility here, and you have made

good use of it. I find the vibrations here have become quite good within these few years, and now you can share this vibration with others.

Once Dhamma starts growing, it keeps growing and nobody can stop it. Grow externally and a large number of people will benefit. Grow internally and deep inside you will benefit. If you yourself do not benefit and you only think of benefiting others, it won't work.

Develop in Dhamma for your own benefit and for the benefit of others; for your own welfare and for the welfare of others; for your own liberation and the liberation of others.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
MARCH 2, 1990
OPENING ADDRESS

DHAMMA *DĀNA*

Dhamma meditators of the world:

You have once again assembled here to see how you can help Dhamma to spread, how you can help suffering people around the world to come in contact with Dhamma so that they emerge from their misery. This is a wonderful Dhamma volition.

Anyone who has really tasted Dhamma knows that it is wonderful. Out in the world, when you taste something delicious you feel like sharing it with your friends and family; this is natural. But there is nothing more delicious than Dhamma—*Dhammarasaṃ sabbarasaṃ jināti*—and someone who has really tasted Dhamma will start to feel *ehi-passiko*—Oh, it is so wonderful! Everyone should taste this! Whether this feeling of *ehi-passiko* has started developing in the mind or not is one yardstick by which progress in Dhamma is measured.

Suppose the feeling has arisen, and one wants Dhamma to be tasted by more and more people, but if one is not yet properly developed in Dhamma there is every likelihood of making mistakes. One may think, "I want more people to come to the path of Dhamma, certainly, but what will my position be?" Or a really degraded person might start calculating how much money he or she should receive, "Certainly I will help people to practise Dhamma, but I must get at least this amount for it. After all, I am giving my time, my life." Or someone may not look for either position or payment, but deep inside there is a strong craving that others should appreciate one's service, "They should thank me, bow down before me and give me great respect." These people have not understood Dhamma. They are not fit to serve others because at the deep level their only aim is to serve themselves.

I remember one of my Muslim Dhamma brothers at Sayagyi's centre. He was an assistant professor or professor at Rangoon University. After he had taken a few courses a volition arose, "I must serve. But how should I serve so that my ego does not manifest itself? If my ego becomes inflated, the service is not service." For a number of days we didn't know what he was doing. He came to the course in the evening—he was not participating in it—and when the students went to sleep, he also slept somewhere. Then, at about ten-thirty, when everybody was asleep, he got up, took a bucket of water and a broom, went to the lavatories, and cleaned them for an hour or two. Then he went to sleep. He didn't want anyone to know of his service.

That is the type of job which others didn't like to do, but Sayagyi did not allow non-meditators to come and do it. And the professor felt,

"I am a fit person, I'd better do that." This is the spirit of service. He didn't expect anything in return, he didn't even want people to appreciate that he was serving. This is the purity of Dhamma service.

Each individual has to examine oneself, "When this enthusiasm to serve comes in my mind, is it tinged with the colour of selfishness, do I want something?" When this "I want something" goes away, you may serve in whatever capacity is needed. "If I am asked to clean the toilets, I will do that. If I am asked to stand at the gate and be the gatekeeper, I will be the gatekeeper. If the next day I am asked to sit on the Dhamma seat and teach Dhamma, yes, I will do that. I am only here to serve." If that is your thought, you are fit to serve.

With my teacher, occasionally someone would very generously offer, "Sayagyi, I will put a building here that people can stay in very comfortably. This is my donation to the centre. Let others come and make use of it, but whenever I or a member of my family comes it should be reserved for us." And Sayagyi was Sayagyi, he would shout, "Mad fellow, learn Dhamma! We don't take donations from people who have not taken Dhamma, and I don't want donations even from people who have taken Dhamma but not understood it!"

This is a healthy, pure tradition. This purity alone will keep Dhamma powerful and this pure Dhamma will serve people properly. If Dhamma becomes degraded and a rich person tries to buy or influence Dhamma it will become a commodity of the market. How will it help anybody? So everybody, now and in the future, who has the responsibility of running such Dhamma centres, here or around the world, should keep in mind the purity of Dhamma. Make a resolution that you won't allow the purity of Dhamma to be spoiled or defiled.

It doesn't matter if the facilities are less extensive, if fewer people come to such Dhamma centres. Dhamma should be given in a proper way. If someone who thinks, "By my *dāna* others are receiving benefit," that person feels joyful to see others joyful. This is the biggest reward that one can get from donation and service. If someone does not understand Dhamma in that way, it's better not to take any donation from this person although he might have taken a number of courses. This guideline is not only for the present management, the present Teacher, the present assistant teachers, but for generations in the future.

Out of madness someone will say, "Well, Vipassana is wonderful. But this exercise is also good, why not add it?" Or someone might say, "Oh, this is wonderful! But why not add a little of our belief? Add this, and you will find a large number of people from my community will come." No! If it becomes polluted it will stop helping people.

Any addition is bound to defile the technique. Sayagyi used to say that if you start any other activity in a Dhamma centre, Māra is very clever and will start clapping, "Ah wonderful, this is very good! Look, there must also be yoga *āsanas* here, wonderful! There must also be a nature cure centre, oh wonderful!" Māra will draw all attention to this secondary activity, and Vipassana will fall into the background. This is bound to happen.

This country, where this wonderful technique originated, lost it within five hundred years because mad people started adding various things to it. It became polluted, defiled, and then its efficacy lessened and it slowly died away. In other countries also, in the same way, it died away.

We are fortunate that one neighbouring country kept it in its pristine purity from generation to generation; that is why we have it. We have the responsibility to ensure that it is maintained for future generations in the same purity. Everyone should feel, "I was given it in its pristine purity and I will hand it over to the next generation in its pristine purity." In this way, at least for a few centuries, it will keep on helping people to come out of their misery.

Also examine yourself: Is past conditioning still very important? You want to serve Dhamma, and still say, "I am from this particular tradition and this is the highest"; if so, you have not submitted to Dhamma. Instead the thought should be *ekāyano maggo*, "I am confident that this is the only way to take out the deep-rooted impurities from the mind. Unless the deep-rooted complexes and impurities are taken out of the mind, I will never be liberated. Nobody can be. This is the one and only way." Only when you have this confidence should you offer yourself to serve Dhamma, in whatever capacity.

You are your own best judge. If you really have a volition that Dhamma should spread, that more and more suffering people should benefit from Dhamma, keep this volition. But don't accept a position where you come in the limelight when you still have attachment to your past traditions, your beliefs, your dogmas. Wait a little, don't take any responsibility.

Quite a few amongst you have that volition, I know. May you gain the merits of serving suffering people around the world, in different capacities. Those who have such volition but are not yet strong enough, make yourselves strong in Dhamma. By making yourselves strong in Dhamma you are not doing something for your Teacher, the Buddha, or anybody else, you are doing something for yourselves. It is for your own good, for your own benefit.

My Sayagyi used to say to those of his students who could go into the *nibbānic* stage at will, "You give the biggest donation to this centre: the wonderful vibration associated with the experience of *nibbāna*." So if you serve in no other capacity but that of a meditator, just meditate. Even if you can't reach the stage of *nibbāna*, it doesn't matter; whatever purity you generate will spread and the atmosphere will be charged with the vibration of purity. That will be your greatest contribution. One person may give millions of rupees in donation but not generate good vibrations and another may generate good vibrations but give nothing materially; the donation of good vibrations is much greater.

Then you can serve in any capacity. It is not necessary to become a Teacher, an assistant teacher, a treasurer, a president, a secretary, a trustee—meditate. Meditate for your own benefit and for the benefit of others. Generate good vibrations for your own good and for the good of others.

May all of you, of whatever country, community or caste, develop in Dhamma. You have a wonderful opportunity now that you have come in contact with Dhamma. Develop in Dhamma! Come out of your misery and be a shining example for others, so that they are attracted towards Dhamma and come out of their misery, their bondages.

May you all be really happy. May all others also be really happy. May you all be really peaceful. May all others also be really peaceful. May you all be liberated. May all others also be liberated.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
MARCH 4, 1990
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: Please explain why we have painful sensations during meditation.

Goenkaji: Sensations can be of different types and have different causes. If you are not accustomed to sit cross-legged for a long time you may experience painful sensations when you start to sit purely because of the sitting posture; or there may be painful sensations because of the food you have taken; or a painful sensation may be due to the atmosphere around you; if it is very hot, for example, a lot of heat may be felt in the body. There can be many reasons for painful sensations.

Another reason for these sensations is your accumulated *saṅkhāras* from the past. When you meditate properly, the power of the *anicca-saññā* [awareness of impermanence] vibrations is so strong that all the impurities inside are shaken and come up on the surface in a great upheaval. Initially the gross *saṅkhāras* surface, and only when they are completely eradicated can one reach the stage of *sotāpanna*.

It's like sweeping a floor: The first time, large pieces of debris are removed, the next sweeping will pick up the smaller particles, and the third sweeping will clear away finer dust. When you sweep with a small brush still finer dust will be removed and, finally, when you wash the floor the dust removed is still finer. Similarly, in Vipassana you work moving from the gross to the subtle, to the subtlest. This is the law of nature. ❧

Sectarianism seems to be another form of casteism. How should we safeguard against these evils?

To me, sectarianism is worse than casteism. Discrimination on the basis of caste is a poison, but is limited only to India; sectarianism has now become universal. Everywhere people are obsessed with their own sect and feel, "My sect is the best!" For them their sect has become Dhamma.

The Dhamma is the law of nature. It is universal, it can't belong to a particular sect. If one generates negativity in the mind one is bound to become miserable; one may call oneself Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim, but this fact does not alter because it is the law of nature. Likewise, if one eradicates the impurities of *lobha, dosa, moha* [craving, aversion, ignorance] from the mind, one is bound to feel liberated and peaceful.

One may consider oneself religious yet not have even a trace of Dhamma, in which case the label has no meaning. But if anyone from any religion is full of Dhamma and is a good person, then this person will help to create a healthy society. So long as sectarianism keeps raising its head there cannot be peace in the world. Equally, so long as casteism keeps raising its head in this country, there cannot be peace in this country.

The Buddha condemned casteism and said one is not a *brāhmaṇa* [of the highest caste] just be-

cause one is born to *brāhmaṇa* parents: One becomes a *brāhmaṇa* only by purifying the mind. One who is called a *śūdra* [low-caste] because of being born in a *śūdra* family can become a *brāhmaṇa* by purifying the mind.

Therefore we have to keep giving importance to Dhamma, and keep explaining that both sectarianism and casteism are the enemies of Dhamma. No matter what caste or religion one belongs to, if one does not care to live the life of *sīla, samādhi* and *paññā,* one has wasted one's life, harmed oneself, and harmed others.

If you get established in *sīla, samādhi,* and *paññā,* no matter what religion you belong to, you are a good, liberated, and pious person, and good people make a good society.

This must be emphasized not merely in discussions or discourses, but in actual practice. Anyone who begins to practise Vipassana will see how useless it is to pride oneself on one's religion if one does not practise *sīla, samādhi,* and *paññā;* and if one is practising these one may belong to any religion. ❧

Can a Hindu, a Jain, or a Muslim take part in religious celebrations at places for the practice of their faith and yet still make progress in Vipassana?

Yes. If you have understood Vipassana properly, even when you attend religious celebrations you will understand that these are meaningless, essenceless. If your family celebrates such festivals, go to the so-called places of worship with them in order to have good relations; you shouldn't cause antagonism to arise. If you have to bow down, yes, bow down.

But how should you bow down? We were taught by my teacher never to bow down mechanically. As one bows down the first time, one is aware of sensations at the top of the head and understands *anicca;* the second time one bows down understanding *dukkha;* and the third time one bows down understanding *anattā.*

Wherever one bows down understanding *anicca, dukkha, anattā* at the experiential level, one is bowing down to Dhamma and nothing can go wrong. But if you believe bowing down to a statue in a temple, mosque, or cathedral will liberate you from misery, you are not a good Vipassana meditator.

We can't say a certain place of worship is either good or bad: The vibration depends on what sort of people go there. When one is established in experiencing sensations within, one starts feeling sensations outside also. A stage comes when, if there are two people sitting in front of you who may outwardly look the same but one is burning with some unhappiness deep inside and the other is peaceful and quiet, you will find you feel heat coming from one person and cool vibrations coming from the other.

These are higher stages, but everyone has to reach higher stages and start to feel the sensations of the vibrations around.

My teacher had his own ways of examining whether a student was developing in Dhamma. An American show called "Holiday On Ice" was playing in Rangoon and while I was meditating on a course he suggested to my sons that they should buy tickets for our family to go and see the show on the day my course ended. On that day he said to me, "Goenka, your boys have bought a ticket for you to see the show, so

you should go with them."

I thought to myself, "I have just taken a ten-day course and now Sayagyi is suggesting I go to see a show where semi-naked girls will be dancing and generating passion? There must be some reason for this." And so I agreed.

Our seats were in the front row and as soon as we sat down the vibration was so bad that I felt nausea and wanted to vomit. We couldn't stay for more than two minutes.

The next day we visited the centre and Sayagyi asked me, "Goenka, did you enjoy 'Holiday On Ice'?"

"Oh, sir…."

"What was your experience?"

So I told him.

"Sādhu, sādhu, sādhu," he replied. "I sent you there to see whether you have started to experience sensations not merely within, but outside also."

At the end of another course he told me to go to Shwedagon Pagoda before returning home. He had never asked me to visit Shwedagon before so I wondered what the purpose was. I was to enter by a particular stairway, go to a place where there is a particular statue, and bow before that statue before returning home.

Knowing my teacher would not have asked me to go there without a reason, I agreed. Shwedagon Pagoda is a wonderful place where relics of the Buddha are enshrined. I had been there a number of times to meditate on a quiet, raised platform, and I knew the place to have wonderful vibrations.

But what happened on that visit? As I bowed down, I found I couldn't raise my head. It was as if melted lead had been poured down my spinal cord. I had such a heavy and painful feeling, and that sensation lasted twenty-four hours.

The next evening I went to my teacher and he questioned me, "Did you go to Shwedagon Pagoda yesterday?"

"Yes, sir."

"And what happened?"

I didn't reply because Sayagyi was a Buddhist by birth, and I thought if I described my experience he would feel hurt. But he pressed me, and I had to tell the truth. I told him, "Sir, I can't even bow down now, my back is so heavy."

"Sādhu, sādhu, sādhu. I sent you there to see what you would feel. People go to that particular place only to crave: They wish for this or that and then pick up a stone that is kept there. If the stone feels light the supplicant will be successful, and if the stone feels heavy the wish will be unfulfilled. What vibrations are there in that area? Only craving."

A good Vipassana meditator should be able to differentiate between the vibrations of this or that place, this or that person. But don't discuss your impressions; otherwise your ego will increase. When you find a bad vibration somewhere don't tell anybody, just smile, give *mettā* and leave. Whether you go to a temple, a mosque or a church, it makes no difference. Feel the vibrations. If the vibrations are good, that is fine; but if the vibrations are not good, without condemnation smilingly give *mettā* and leave.

A Vipassana meditator should always bear in mind that it is equanimity towards the internal

vibrations which will take us to the final goal. ❧

In India recitations, mantras and visualization are very important in meditation. Why do you insist that we should not give attention to these and instead devote our attention to pure respiration and sensations?

We are not against verbalization or visualization; they have their own value and are wonderful aids to concentration. If you keep imagining a shape, especially the shape of someone in whom you have great faith, your mind will calm down and become concentrated. Similarly if you mentally repeat a particular word, the mind will calm down and it is also purified. However, it is only purified on the surface; the impurities remain suppressed deep inside.

The aim of Vipassana is not merely to concentrate the mind nor to purify it at the surface level, but to purify it at the deepest level.

Every word has its own vibration, and especially those words called *bīja* mantras [seed mantras]. If you keep repeating them you get engulfed in a created, artificial vibration, and this is good to some extent because it acts like a shield and doesn't allow some bad vibrations to disturb you. But your deep-rooted impurities don't have a chance to be eradicated; and also, you won't discover what happens to your body and mind when you generate impurities like anger, fear, passion or ego.

Any kind of impurity generated in the mind is bound to create a sensation on the body because mind and matter are so interrelated that they influence each other. If the mind has a positive thought you find pleasant sensations. If the mind is full of negativity you find unpleasant sensations. This is the law of nature. When an impurity in the mind generates an unpleasant sensation you react to that sensation with aversion, and this reaction itself creates a particular type of unpleasant sensation, and in turn you react to this. So your reaction to the impurities multiplies because of these sensations, and the sensations multiply because of the impurities—a vicious circle starts.

The Buddha discovered that to break this vicious circle you must observe sensations objectively, understanding that they are *anicca*. This is because *vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*—dependent on sensation, craving arises. It is only pleasant sensations on the body that make you generate craving and clinging, nothing else. It appears as though you are craving something outside—an external form, sound, smell, touch, or taste—but there is a gap between the outside object and your reaction to it.That gap was discovered by the Buddha and was his Enlightenment.

It is not *saḷāyatana-paccayā taṇhā*—dependent on the sense objects, craving arises. But instead *saḷāyatana-paccayā phasso; phassa-paccayā vedanā; vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*—dependent on the sense objects, contact arises; dependent on contact, sensation arises; dependent on sensations, craving arises. This missing link was discovered by the Buddha. If you don't make use of it, you are not following the teaching that will take you to the final goal.

When people are involved only in created vibrations or imaginary forms they give no importance to natural sensations; but if they start working with natural sensations they go to the

deepest level of their minds and eradicate their impurities.

We are not here to condemn others who use verbalization or visualization, but those who have confidence that this path will take us to the final goal certainly have to understand the importance of *vedanā.* Whether the *vedanā* are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, observe them with *anicca.* As your understanding of *anicca* becomes stronger, this purifies the depths of the mind and you reach the final goal that is beyond *vedanā.* ❧

You have spoken quite often about our roles and the relationship between Dhamma servers, trustees and assistant teachers. Would you throw light on this subject once again?

I keep repeating the same thing: If one serves Dhamma with the hope of material gain or even hoping for the subtler attraction of status and fame, one is not fit to be an assistant teacher, a trustee or a Dhamma server.

One should generate only love and compassion for others and serve out of a feeling of gratitude and a wish to help them come out of misery, without expecting anything in return. The position in which one works makes no difference; one must be, as far as possible, free from ego.

If your service generates ego in your mind, it is polluted. When it cannot help you, how can it help others? A sick person cannot help another sick person. Come out of your own sickness first. See that Dhamma has started to help you and that you are coming out of ego. Then you can start serving.

Once you have started serving, if you notice that you keep trying to assert your views, you should understand that at this time you are not fit to serve. You'd better meditate and come out of this egotism as much as possible before you continue with service. If this understanding develops at a deep level, the relationship between the assistant teachers, servers, management and trustees will be cordial; otherwise not.

The Buddha said that if somebody points out a defect to you, thank him. He is showing you a hidden treasure; you don't know how useful this treasure is. Thank whoever points out your errors and examine yourself, thinking, "Yes, several people have told me I have this defect so I certainly must have it. Now I should not justify it, I'd better examine it and try to get rid of it." That is the best thing to do.

It is difficult to discover whether one is at fault or not because the tendency is to justify one's actions to oneself and others; but if you find you get irritated when people criticize you then yes, there really is something wrong within you. If you can't bear somebody criticizing you, it shows you are still very weak in Dhamma.

The Buddha wanted us to live in cordiality without quarrelling. Buddha's sons *(buddhaputra)* and Buddha's daughters *(buddhaputri)* never quarrel, they always have *piyacakkhū*, eyes full of love. Their relationship is like *khīra odaka*, milk and water. Once combined, they can't be separated. All those who are working for Dhamma should be like *khīra odaka,* milk and water.

Whatever the way in which you serve Dhamma, you are a Vipassana meditator first and last, so work to eradicate your ego. If you do this, relationships will automatically become cordial. Make use of Dhamma for good

relationships. ❧

Running Vipassana courses needs a lot of money; we have to arrange food, residential quarters etc. Is there any objection to charging for courses?

There is a big objection to charging! Dhamma is not a commodity that can be sold. The Buddha never sold Dhamma. People came to him and he never asked for anything towards the maintenance of his *āshram*. Our tradition is against making Dhamma a commodity for sale.

Initially somebody may say, "We would only charge for the actual expenses." But these would start growing and soon you would charge for the residence, the electricity bills, the water bills, and then for the teacher's needs: This teacher has this need, and that teacher has that…it would keep multiplying.

I repeatedly hear that if we charge for courses the organization will run properly, without a worry. I reply, "All around the world courses are given at centres and outside centres—and how do they run? Students give *dāna*. When people find something is beneficial they feel like giving, and this is not like paying a fee or a hotel bill. Compassion, *mettā,* and the volition to help others to meditate arise and inspire them to give."

If you start charging, even for the minimum requirements of board and lodging, you put up a barrier against very poor people attending. Some people come to courses here who are the sole earners in their family, and whatever they earn on a daily basis helps their family to get two meals for that day. Just to come here for ten days is a huge sacrifice. If at the end of the course you also want such people to pay for the expenses, you are creating a barrier against their attending.

To charge would not be Dhamma, it would not be the teaching of the Buddha. The Dhamma cannot be limited to wealthy people, it is for all who are suffering.

If you don't put up such barriers, Dhamma will take care of everything. See how the Dhamma is spreading? This shows that without charging the Dhamma grows, and grows healthily. This is how the Dhamma remains pure. Often twenty-five percent or even fifty percent of the people don't give anything and leave. So what? Who cares? Money comes and the Dhamma keeps flowing. This is the proper way to teach Dhamma.

I do not recommend charging for courses either now or in the future. The coming generations who teach Dhamma should be very careful not to fall into this trap of Māra. Be aware, don't become a victim of Māra. ❧

Sometimes one spouse has done a Vipassana course but the other has not. How can this situation be helped?

You can't press your life partner to take the path of Dhamma; pressure won't help. The only way to help them is to have great *mettā* for them. By your own behaviour show that Dhamma has helped you. Let your partner think, "My spouse used to be very short-tempered but has become less irritable after practising Vipassana. This person was very egocentric, but now is less so." Only this will attract your partner to Dhamma, nothing else. ❧

Sometimes both husband and wife are Vipassana meditators but they quarrel. What can be done?

This shows they are not Vipassana meditators; they must be doing Vipassana merely as a rite or a ritual. If both husband and wife are really Vipassana meditators, how could they quarrel? Vipassana takes us away from all quarrelling to a life of cordiality. This is one yardstick to measure whether one is really progressing in Dhamma or not. ❧

There is great turmoil in some parts of India and also violence all over the world. Can Vipassana play a role in relieving this?

Vipassana is the only way to solve these problems, not only in India but throughout the world. Such violence arises where there are deep impurities such as anger, hatred, and animosity in the minds of the people, and on some excuse or other these negativities are manifested. If the mind is full of negativity, it will succumb to violence and harm others.

We all want peace in the world but how will it happen? No amount of sermons, punishment, or violent opposition can solve this problem. The only way is for each individual's problems to be tackled with Vipassana.

After all, society is made up of individuals. If you forget the individual and want to change the whole world, you will not be successful. If the whole jungle has withered and you want to see it green and blooming, you have to water the root of every tree. If each tree becomes green, the entire jungle will become green. Similarly, you have to deal with individuals; although it takes time, there is no other way. Vipassana is the only solution.

See that Vipassana spreads. We must have compassion, not hatred, for these miserable people—the terrorists and those who use violence. They need Vipassana. If they get Vipassana, they will certainly change for the better.

People have changed through coming to Vipassana courses, and this is bound to happen because it is the nature of Dhamma. And when the individual changes, society will change. If even ten percent of society practise Vipassana and manifest their purity, goodwill, and *mettā,* they will start to attract more and more people, and the whole society will start changing. This is the only solution. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 13, 1991
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: Dhamma Giri is expanding rapidly. In addition to the courses being held, we now have the Vipassana Research Institute, a computer section, the Pāli section, and considerable construction work. Considering all this, what is the most important function of a Dhamma centre? What should be given priority? Who are the most important people at a centre?

Goenkaji: The main activity at all our meditation centres around the world is teaching Vipassana. However, Dhamma Giri is the central, most important centre where we have this other activity of conducting research into *pariyatti,* the words of the Buddha.

There is considerable confusion concerning the theoretical aspect of Dhamma. For example, there are books written by non-meditators which contain incorrect translations of Buddha's words, and we find that these wrong interpretations have created confusion in the minds of students. For a student who is practising meditation, with one-hundred-per-cent faith in what is being taught, it is not necessary to go to *pariyatti* for more inspiration or guidance. But if a student comes across a book which gives a totally different interpretation of Buddha's teaching, then certainly confusion will be created in the mind of the student, and the student will find it difficult to progress in Dhamma.

For this reason we found it essential to establish VRI to complement the practical aspect of Buddha's teaching. The Institute will conduct a complete research of the words of Buddha, as well as the commentaries and sub-commentaries. It will also publish an explanation related to the practice. This research is for no other purpose than to clarify the technique of Vipassana and to help students understand what *pariyatti* is. This does not mean that the centre's activity of teaching Vipassana meditation should become weaker in any respect. Meditation will always remain the most important activity.

This research work should not be undertaken at every centre. Dhamma Giri is in a unique position: It has a suitable facility and a large area of land, of which a portion has been dedicated to this research work.

As far as giving importance to activities at a centre, practising the technique will always remain supremely important. Next in importance is serving. However, if somebody wants to donate to help an announced project, such as publishing a book or conducting some specific research work, or constructing a building at a centre, the money should be put to that purpose. The organization should never press anybody saying, "Your money should be given here or there; this is more important, that is more important." The volition must be the do-

nor's. Similarly, serving must be according to the volition of the Dhamma server. One may feel more comfortable or happier serving where meditation is taught; then one should serve there. But if one feels more comfortable on the literary side, one should serve there.

Meditation will always remain the most important function of the organization; therefore, the meditator is the most important person. We are all here to serve the meditators. If there were no meditators, there would not be this conference; all these buildings would be of no use. So the most important person is the meditator. ❧

How important is it to maintain the purity of *sīla* on Dhamma land? If *sīla* is allowed to slip on Dhamma land, is it enough to say "Dhamma will take care"?

Dhamma will not take care. Dhamma only takes care of those people who take care of Dhamma. If some one does not take care of Dhamma, Dhamma will not take care of this person. It is absolutely essential that everyone living on Dhamma land protect the Dhamma within themselves, and then Dhamma will start protecting them. If you break your *sīla* anywhere, it is wrong; you will be punished by the law of nature. But when you break your *sīla* on Dhamma land, the punishment you get is very severe because not only have you broken *sīla,* you have disturbed the wholesome Dhamma atmosphere around you, and you have harmed so many people by putting an obstacle in the way of their progress.

In the words of the Buddha, *Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacāriṃ*—One who lives the life of Dhamma is protected by Dhamma—not one who has not taken care of Dhamma. Dhamma is like a double-edged sword. For one who is living the life of Dhamma, Dhamma cuts down all the obstacles for this person, all the difficulties, all the enemies. But for one who does not practise Dhamma, this very sword will start cutting this person. One has to be very careful. Dhamma has to be protected on Dhamma land. ❧

It seems that many students do not continue to meditate after their first course, so it appears that they have wasted the wonderful opportunity of coming in contact with pure Dhamma. What can we do about this?

It is a great misfortune for somebody to get such an invaluable jewel and then not make use of it for the whole life. But what can we do about it? With all the compassion and love we give this invaluable jewel to the student. It is for the student to make use of it, to continue to practise and develop in Dhamma and get the best fruits of Dhamma. We can just keep on encouraging people. ❧

Many financial institutions in which money is invested loan that money to groups who engage in harmful activities, such as arms manufacture, pesticide manufacture, the testing of chemicals on animals, etc. In recent years many so-called ethical investment bodies have been formed which loan money only to parties who will use it within certain ethical limits laid down by the lenders. The return on investment of money in ethical investment may or may not be equal to an investment in a larger institution. If *dāna* is in-

vested, can preference be given to ethical investment even though this may mean a slightly lower return on investment? Or should *dāna* be invested aiming simply at the maximum financial return so that more money is available for eradicating deep-rooted suffering through Vipassana?

At present I don't think there is money to invest anywhere. Whatever money comes is used in so many activities that are going on. But later on a situation may arise where you have money and you get interest on that money for the maintenance of your institution. Then of course this question becomes quite relevant. In Dhamma we must be very careful. Obviously if we know we are investing our money in a certain industrial or commercial firm that is engaged in *micchā-ājīva* [wrong livelihood] such as producing arms, ammunition or liquor certainly we must withdraw our funds. We should never encourage such things.

But there are financial institutions which give loans to different people, some of whom may be engaged in wrong livelihood, and it may prove difficult to check on all the people dealing with the firms with whom we have invested our money. Obviously our preference is to invest our money with institutions or persons who will use this money for *sammā-ājīva* [right livelihood], not for *micchā-ājīva.* Certainly the aim should not be just to make money, but also to encourage Dhamma. If we are clearly harming Dhamma, if we are encouraging people to break their *sīla,* then it is not Dhamma even if we make money. So if we find that our money is invested in an organization which is using it to harm others, we must withdraw our funds. But otherwise we should not go to extremes; it won't be practical. ❧

We feel that *mettā* works. It is a common experience that when we meet a saintly person, we feel peace and harmony. How does this relate to the belief that by giving *dāna* you help a person in the lower fields, maybe your ancestors or friends? How do you explain this phenomenon in the context of Dhamma?

When you say that *mettā* works—how does it work? If the mind is pure and one is generating vibrations of *mettā*, these vibrations can go anywhere, whether to this *loka* or that *loka*, this lower field or that higher field—anywhere. If we direct our vibrations towards a certain being, certainly it moves towards that being. And when it reaches that individual, the being comes into contact with this vibration, and feels very happy, because the vibrations are vibrations of Dhamma, of peace, of harmony.

When you donate something in the name of someone who has passed away, with the wish, "May the merit of my donation go to so-and-so," then your volition of *mettā*, this vibration, moves to that person and they will get elated by those vibrations. And because these vibrations are with the base of Dhamma, something or other will happen which will take him or her towards Dhamma. Whether in this life or in a future life, it helps him or her towards Dhamma, then this is how we are helping those who are in lower fields or even in higher fields.

And now, what is it that you donate? You donate the best thing that you have, and the best thing that you have is your own meditation. So at the end of your meditation—the end of a meditation course or the end of your daily sitting—you remember anyone who is very dear to you who has passed away, "I share my merits with you." This is your *mettā,* and the vibra-

tion which goes to that person carries such a Dhamma strength because you have meditated and you are sharing your meditation with this person. Naturally it is very helpful. ❧

In Dhamma much emphasis has been given to leading a life of simplicity and detachment. In the world today, how can a householder achieve these objectives?

You see, more importance should be given to detachment. Simplicity will follow, but it should not be the aim. Otherwise Dhamma will deteriorate. There will be a class of people who will just make a show, "Look how simply I live," but deep inside there will be attachment for wealth and riches, etc. This does not lead to liberation. So the aim of Dhamma should be to develop detachment. Once detachment is developed, none of these things will hold any attraction. Naturally, simplicity will develop. But if this becomes the aim, it will become a show. More important is purification of the mind through detachment. ❧

You have clarified many times the distinction between Dhamma and sect. Please clarify it once again. It seems that the poison of sectarian religious fundamentalism is about to destroy the entire human civilization. Can this be averted?

Yes, it is our duty to keep explaining to people what Dhamma is, and what sectarianism is. It is very unfortunate that when Dhamma comes up in its pure form, very soon it deteriorates into a sect. So the difference between the two should be made clear to help avert this catastrophe throughout the world and especially in a country like India, where there is so much sectarian division and so much strife. But this problem is everywhere in one form or another.

For one who practises Vipassana, it becomes very clear what Dhamma is: Dhamma is the law of nature. Dhamma is always universal, the law of nature is universal. Sectarian things can never be universal. They are different from one another. To those who practise Vipassana, it becomes clearer and clearer, "See, as I defile my mind, nature starts punishing me here and now. It is not that I have to wait for my next life for the punishment. Similarly, as I purify my mind I am rewarded, and I am rewarded here and now. This is the law of nature, this is Dhamma."

If we perform any pure action—vocal, mental, physical—then certainly we are on the path of Dhamma because we are rewarded and we start helping others. Otherwise we are harmed and we harm others also. This very simple distinction between Dhamma and sect must become clearer and clearer. To those who meditate, it becomes clear that one yardstick by which to measure whether one is really progressing in Vipassana or not is whether attachments towards sectarian beliefs, philosophical beliefs, sectarian rites and rituals, sectarian religious celebrations, etc. are getting dissolved. If the attachment is still very strong one may feel, "I am progressing in Vipassana," but actually this person is *not* progressing in Vipassana. If one progresses in Vipassana, then naturally, without any effort, all attachments will go away, because one has started understanding what the real universal Dhamma is.

This cannot be forced on people. We can't expect the whole world to start practising Vipassana. The real solution comes only when people start experiencing the law of nature; it will become clear only by the practice. On our part we should keep explaining to people what Dhamma is and what sect is and encourage them to practise and see for themselves. ❧

What are the basic principles that will ensure the harmonious interaction between assistant teachers, trustees and Dhamma servers in a rapidly expanding Dhamma organization?

The best way—the only way—is for the assistant teachers, the trustees, the Dhamma servers, all to meditate. Meditation is the only answer, nothing else. If people stop meditating or they give less importance to the meditation and more importance to their status, their power, their authority, then this deterioration of Dhamma will start harming the whole organization. Somebody who has been appointed as an assistant teacher or a senior assistant teacher should always feel very humble, "I have been given this work just to serve Dhamma and to develop my own *pāramīs.* I am not here to boss people. I am not here to say that I'm superior to you because I am sitting on a slightly higher seat."

You are sitting on a slightly higher seat only to serve people, not to inflate your ego. Every assistant teacher and senior assistant teacher should feel very grateful to all those people who are coming to the courses, because they are helping you to develop your *pāramīs.* If they do not come, how can you serve? How can you give this *dāna* of Dhamma? So always be very grateful to them. This should always remain the attitude of those who sit on the Dhamma seat.

Other meditators who are trustees, servers or students—for them it is absolutely essential that they have a feeling of respect for the person who is sitting on the Dhamma seat because this person represents the Teacher. You are grateful to the Teacher who has given you something; then naturally the assistant is representing the Teacher. If you are not grateful to the Teacher, all right—at least you are grateful to Dhamma. This person who is sitting on a Dhamma seat represents Dhamma now. So you should always have a feeling of reverence, a feeling of respect towards somebody who is representing Dhamma.

This is the attitude of the students, of the trustees, of the servers, but never of the Teacher or the assistant teacher. If a teacher feels, "I represent Dhamma, now everyone must give respect to me," such a person can never develop into a teacher in the future.

At present, a trial is being given, just a trial; more and more are being trained to be teachers, and of course we do not like to deauthorize people. But wherever we find this kind of defect, with all the compassion we will try to rectify it, we will try to help this person to come out of the defect. But the point is very clear: If anybody sitting on the Dhamma seat expects something from the students, expects something from the trustees or servers, this person can never become a teacher of Dhamma. This is so clear.

Do not expect anything; just feel grateful, "I have an opportunity to help my teacher and his mission, or my teacher's teacher and his

mission. I am simply doing this job, which gives me an opportunity to develop my own *pāramīs.*" If you are working in this way, certainly you will become an ideal teacher in time, and this wonderful technique of Dhamma will continue from generation to generation.

So assistant teachers must be careful not to inflate their egos while teaching; and at the same time, students should always give importance to the Teacher or the assistant teachers.

Even though we do not want this tradition to become an organized religion, slowly, after a number of centuries Dhamma *will* become an organized religion. We cannot help this. However, at present there must be some organization. Wherever there is a centre there must be a trust, partly for the sake of some tax relief and partly for the management of the courses and centres. But in this tradition, when an assistant teacher is appointed, we can't say that he or she is appointed for one year and next year somebody else will be an assistant teacher, and next year somebody else will be an assistant teacher, as we do with trustees; this is not workable. A teacher who sits on the Dhamma seat develops rapport with the students, and this rapport has to be broadened. So it is important that those who are given the job of assistant teacher continue unless someone makes a very serious mistake. Even then, he or she will not be removed; we will try to rectify the error, to help him or her to come out of any mistakes. So the assistants will continue to serve.

The trustees however, will not continue; they are appointed for one year only. The next year they may or may not be re-appointed. That is not because there is a defect in them, but because more and more opportunities have to be given to students to serve Dhamma in different ways. So more and more people should become trustees. More and more people should become president or secretary or treasurer of the trust—or occupy other posts, so that they can give service. There may be many Dhamma servers who are quite fit even to become assistant teachers but, due to family or personal reasons, they cannot take up the job. This does not mean that they are inferior. But one must also understand, "I may keep giving service, but if I become a trustee it may be just for a year or two; this will keep on changing."

The assistant teachers are going to serve continuously. They know the backgrounds of the past trustees; they know the problems of the past year or two or five. And they will continue to monitor trust activities so their views are helpful to the servers, the trustees. In this way, importance has to be given to the assistant teachers.

Of course, the assistant teachers will not order everybody about. All decisions about the management of centres should be made by the trust. However, I would like to see—and this is now being practised—that wherever there is a trust meeting, the local assistant teachers should be invited. They are invited, and they attend, but they don't participate in the discussion: They just observe what is happening. If advice is asked of them, yes, they give their advice; or if they are involved in the work of a particular committee, they participate. Otherwise let them observe what is happening so that they know what is going on. If they see something which goes totally against the principle of Dhamma, then they should intervene in a very polite way,

"I feel this decision of yours, or this thought of yours, is not according to Dhamma. I feel it should be this way." Of course on major trust decisions, the assistants' experience should be made use of. But in the minor day-to-day administration of the trust, they should simply observe.

Another problem that can arise among the trustees, or between servers and trustees, or between assistant teachers and trustees—I have been encountering this in some cases—is that some people have developed a habit of finding fault with others. They keep writing and talking with others: "Look, this assistant teacher is like this. Look, this other assistant teacher is like this." They don't realize how much unwholesome *kamma* they are accumulating. If they find something wrong in an assistant teacher, they should politely go to him or her and say, "I don't like this action of yours, or this view of yours. I feel that this is wrong. Please let us discuss it and settle it here."

Instead of speaking directly to the person with whom you find fault, if you start writing or talking about it with others, this goes against *sīla.* This is backbiting, slanderous talk—which is wrong. So before talking to anybody else about the defect of your fellow meditator—whether the fellow meditator is a server or a trustee or an assistant teacher—first meet him or her directly and discuss the problem. If you don't come to terms, if you still have doubts, then—if it is a difference of opinion among the trustees—go to the assistant teacher. If the difference is between the assistant teacher and a trustee, then it's better to go to the senior assistant teacher and settle things. And if it is not possible to settle things, then of course come to the Teacher. Now we are thinking—perhaps in this meeting itself—we may announce certain senior assistant teachers who will be responsible for a particular centre. All problems pertaining to the centre should go to this senior teacher so that he or she can deal with it. If there is a problem which can't be settled, then of course it must come to the Teacher.

Whether one is a trustee or an assistant teacher or Dhamma server, one must have one thing in view, "I must be a very selfish person." Buddha wanted us to become selfish; selfish in the sense that we should know where our self-interest lies. It lies in purifying our own minds. If out of enthusiasm you feel, "I am spreading Dhamma, I am doing this missionary work," but you keep defiling your mind and developing anger and negativity, then you have started harming yourself. Dhamma wants everyone to be selfish—but selfish in the real sense, so that every action of yours is really beneficial and is really helping you progress towards liberation. If it is harming you and you think, "It doesn't matter if it harms me, I'm helping so many people," then you haven't understood Dhamma. Thus every teacher, every trustee, every server, must examine oneself, "Are all these arguments that I am having with others, are all these talks that I am having with others, all this finding fault with others—am I helping myself or am I harming myself? Am I generating anger? Am I generating hatred or ill will towards this person? Am I doing something which defiles my own mind?" If this is happening, then one's own Dhamma is deteriorating. Nobody likes to harm oneself. If you see clearly, "My action is harming me, I must be very careful," then relations will automatically become cordial. ❧

May Dhamma servers leave a course site to do some physical exercise (such as jogging) if they ensure that they do not distract the students by doing so, and if they have completed their assigned duty?

Certainly, Dhamma servers should exercise. The meditators meditate from 4:00 to 4:30 a.m. until 9:00 to 9:30 p.m., and if they get a little walking time it's enough. But for others who are engaged in Dhamma service it's like their daily life, so they can have physical exercise—of course without disturbing the meditators. They can go jogging, but they have to be very careful. For example, here in Dhamma Giri, if somebody starts jogging and goes into the town this may create some unpleasant reaction with the people there. Or if somebody goes behind the centre where nobody lives, in such a solitary place something harmful could happen. Fortunately we have a place just under the hill, of about eight to ten acres. Here you can make two tracks, one for the males, one for the females, where you can go jogging. You can do the same at other centres. Wherever it is possible, an opportunity must be given to the servers to exercise without disturbing the meditators. ❧

What role do you see for Vipassana meditators in the area of social action, such as helping others in the world—the poor, hungry, homeless, or sick?

Helping others is absolutely essential for every Dhamma person. For someone who is meditating, of course the main aim is to purify the mind. But one indication that the mind is becoming purified is that the volition arises to help others. A pure mind will always be full of love and compassion. One cannot see people suffering all around and say, "I don't care. I am working for my own liberation." This sort of attitude shows a lack of development in Dhamma. If one is developing in Dhamma, then naturally, in whichever capacity, with whatever abilities one has, in whichever field one can serve, one should serve. But when you are serving people in different social fields, in a school or a hospital or some other institution, you may develop this madness, "Now that I have really purified my mind and am giving all of my time for serving people, the purification process will continue by itself. I should stop my morning and evening sittings because I am doing so much work now. I am doing such a great social service." This is a serious mistake.

With real purity of mind, whatever service you give will be strong, effective and fruitful. Keep purifying your mind, keep examining whether your mind is really becoming purified, and keep serving people without expecting anything in return. ❧

Are there forces that support us as we develop our *pāramīs*?

Certainly—visible forces as well as invisible ones. For example, people tend to associate with those of similar interest, background or character. When we develop good qualities in us, we naturally attract people who have those qualities. When we come in contact with such good people, naturally we get support from them. If we generate love, compassion and goodwill, we will get tuned up with all be-

ings—visible or invisible—that have these positive vibrations, and we will start receiving support from them. It is like tuning a radio to receive waves of a certain band from a distant broadcasting station. Similarly, we tune ourselves to vibrations of the type we generate, and so we receive the benefit of these vibrations.

It is not a matter of seeking the intervention of a more powerful being to achieve one's desires. You have to work hard, with the understanding that your work will enable you to benefit from the good vibrations of others. As the saying goes: The Lord helps those who help themselves. ❧

Will *mettā* get stronger as *samādhi* gets stronger?

Certainly. Without *samādhi* the *mettā* is really not *mettā.* When the *samādhi* is weak, the mind is very agitated, and the mind is agitated only when it is generating some impurity, some type of craving or aversion. With these impurities you cannot expect to generate good qualities, vibrations of *mettā* [loving kindness], of *karuṇā* [compassion]. It isn't possible.

At the vocal level, you may keep saying, "Be happy, be happy," but this doesn't work. If you have *samādhi,* then your mind is calm and quiet, at least for that moment. It is not necessary that all the impurities have gone away; but at least for that moment when you are going to give *mettā,* your mind is quiet, calm, and not generating any impurity. Then whatever *mettā* you give is strong, fruitful, beneficial. ❧

What is the significance of the 9:00 p.m. *mettā* session?

Well, *mettā* is *mettā.* It is always good, whatever the time; it helps. This special *mettā* period is part of the duty of the teacher who tries to keep the mind as pure as possible, and with that purity tries to get tuned up with the vibrations of all saintly beings. It is the job of the teacher to get tuned up with these vibrations and spread them. The students who are sitting there receive them. In many cases Dhamma servers work very hard the whole day, and after these ten minutes of *mettā* they come and say, "Now, I feel really relaxed." This is because they were able to get tuned up with these vibrations.

Of course there are some who may not get anything. We cannot judge who is capable of accepting *mettā* and who is not. Our duty is just to give as much *mettā* as possible. Sayagyi used to say, "I'm a transformer. I may draw 11,000 volts and then distribute 1,100, 440, 220, or 110, volts. According to a person's capacity, they accept it." So this is the job of the teacher. The students will accept it, whatever their capacity. ❧

To what extent is the technique and the way you present it, yours or Sayagyi U Ba Khin's and to what extent is it given by Buddha, the Enlightened One?

The presentation is certainly the presentation of U Ba Khin and of Goenka; and it may differ from the presentation of the Buddha. But as far as the technique is concerned, every Buddha teaches the same technique. If a Buddha does

not change the technique of the previous Buddha, then who is U Ba Khin or Goenka to change it? Who are all the other Dhamma teachers to change it? The technique never changes—nobody should change it—but the presentation can change.

In one of his talks, Sayagyi U Ba Khin said, "I have developed a technique which is very suitable to non-Buddhist, English-speaking people. Everybody can work with it and they will get the same result. Come, try. You will get the same result."

What was his technique? It wasn't a special technique of meditation, but a way of explaining things. All the teachers before U Ba Khin and those who were his contemporaries were teaching Burmese Buddhists, and Burmese Buddhists have certain ways of understanding. Their tradition explains *satipaṭṭhāna* in a certain way, with certain words, terminology and examples. All the monks and lay teachers explained it in the same way. However, U Ba Khin had to deal with non-Buddhist English-speaking people, so he had to develop a way of expressing Dhamma which they could understand, which would allow them to work properly. Sayagyi gave scientific examples, using modern, scientific words which the Buddha or any other teacher in the chain of teachers would not have used. The same thing happened when I came to India, to this vast country with so many sects, traditions and beliefs. At the present time, we have to deal with the world; and throughout the world there are so many sects, so many different groups of people with their particular mental conditionings.

In India itself there was a vast spectrum of different ways of thinking and teaching at the time of the Buddha. There were so many other teachers. After the Buddha, his teaching started to deteriorate and was mixed with other things.

This spectrum is here today. So naturally, when I talk with people, I need to know who is listening to me. I must express things in a way that they can understand according to their own background. If they do not understand what I am saying, the whole purpose of my talking to them will be lost. They cannot practise Dhamma unless they are convinced that whatever I am saying has some meaning. When I give a discourse to Western people or I talk in Hindi with Indian people, I may seem to be saying something different because the examples, the similes and the stories all change according to who is in the audience. But the essence remains the same.

Yes, one could say the technique is changed because the way of expressing it has changed, the way of explaining things is changed. However, this was so even with the Buddha. If you go through his words you will find that when he was talking with a particular community—say the Brahmin community—then he would talk in a way that they could understand. When he was talking with the *śramaṇa* community, he would talk in a way that the *śramaṇas* could understand.

There is a word in the Pāli language: *vohārakusala*—skilful means. For a Buddha there must be this great skill in teaching. In the *Jātaka* Tales, when he was the *Bodhisattva*, we find this quality of skilful means there throughout. In different situations he skilfully saves himself from slipping in *sīla* and he skilfully helps others. When he became a Buddha, he was all the more skilful. So everyone who is walking on the path

of the Buddha, and everyone who is going to spread the Buddha's teaching, has to be skilful; and this skill is to be used according to different situations from time to time. In one situation the skill of explaining Dhamma is used in one way, and in another situation in another way.

Now another thing has started in the minds of the people, "This is U Ba Khin's technique, this is Goenka's technique, etc." Again it's a question of suitably expressing Dhamma to people. U Ba Khin used the word "sweeping" and now in the West people say, "Oh, this is the 'sweeping' technique of Goenka or U Ba Khin; and this is the *Satipatthāna* technique of Mahasi Sayadaw," and so on.

Understand how this happens. When somebody reaches a stage where the entire body and mind get dissolved, the *bhaṅga* stage, there is no gross obstacle anywhere. You start from the head and so quickly your attention goes down to the feet without any obstacle; or you start from the feet and so quickly it comes back up. It's like a flow. In order to express this and make people understand, Sayagyi used this word "sweep." That means from head to feet you quickly move your attention without any obstacle anywhere. If you reach that stage of sweeping, then you sweep. With Indian people, I use the word *dhārāpravāha*, that is, with a free-flow. With the Westerners also I say "free-flow." This does not mean that I have changed the technique. I have to explain how, without any obstacle, your mind can move like a flow from head to feet, and from feet to head. If you reach that stage, then you have free-flow.

In his own way the Buddha said the same thing: *Sabbakāya-paṭisaṃvedi assasissāmi ti sikkhati sabbakāya-paṭisaṃvedi passasissāmi ti sikkhati.* One learns that as one breathes in, within one breath one feels the whole body. Now how can you feel the whole body when there are obstacles here and there? This happens only when one reaches the stage of *bhaṅga*, total dissolution. Then your attention moves in one breath from head to feet, and in one breath from feet to head. You breathe in, you feel the whole body; you breathe out, you feel the whole body. The Buddha used the word *bhaṅga* for this; U Ba Khin uses the word "sweeping" for this; and Goenka uses the term "free-flow." This does not mean we are changing the technique in any way. The technique remains the same. The technique of expressing Dhamma, of course, differs from time to time, from place to place, from group of people to group of people. However, the technique of meditation should never change. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 13, 1991
CLOSING ADDRESS

THE GROWING LIGHT OF DHAMMA

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

We have undertaken very serious work. It is a very serious responsibility to serve others in Dhamma. If there is any impurity in our intentions, if there is even a trace of desire that, "I must get something in return for all this service that I am giving," then our whole purpose will be lost. People who expect some material gain for the teaching of Dhamma can never teach Dhamma; they are totally unfit. But there will be quite a few who understand that they are not serving people in Dhamma for any material gain, and yet there will be some expectation of getting respect from others, "Well look, I am doing such a good service. I am giving such an invaluable jewel, so I have every right to be respected." If even a trace of expecting appreciation from others remains, one should understand that one is not fit to serve others. One has not understood that one has to serve oneself first and only then can one serve others.

The Enlightened One exhorted all those whom he sent out: *Caratha bhikkhave cārikam*—Go forth! Go forth for what? *Bahujana-hitāya*—for the good of many; *bahujana-sukhāya*—for the happiness of many; *lokānu-kampāya*—out of compassion for people.

There is suffering all around us. More and more people should come out of their suffering. The aim of giving Dhamma to others is to help them come out of their misery, not for personal gain. Your gain is automatically involved. To reach the final stage of full enlightenment you have to develop your *pāramīs*, and everything that you do for the good of others helps to develop your *pāramīs*.

If one thinks even for a moment, "Let more and more people start calling themselves Buddhists, let there be a strong Buddhist sect, let people who are in the courtyard of other sects come into my courtyard so I have a larger number of followers," then one has not understood Buddha, one has not understood Dhamma.

There was an incident in the life of the Buddha: He went to a place where there were a large number of recluses and he gave a discourse to them. Being from a particular sect, they were hesitant, thinking, "This fellow may convert us away from our sect." He explained, "I did not come here to gather students for myself. I am not interested in making you my students. Don't become frightened of that. I am not here to break your relationship with your teachers; may that continue. You have received something from your teachers, and you have

respect for them as you should have. You give donations to these teachers; keep on giving to them. I am not here to stop you from achieving your goal of coming out of suffering and reaching full liberation. Whatever I will teach you will help you to reach that goal. O, recluses! Give me seven days of your life, just try this."

This should be our attitude: "Just try this. We are not interested in converting you from this or that religion. Give just ten days of your life and after that if you find it good, accept it. Otherwise, leave it." Then we are not expecting anything in return. We are just on the giving end. Sayagyi used to say, "I am on the giving end, never on the receiving end. If people want to take, they take. If they don't want to take, they don't take. With all my compassion, I just give."

This should be the attitude of everyone who takes the responsibility of giving Dhamma. We are simply giving, without any kind of expectation and with only one motive—compassion, the wish that more and more people may benefit.

And if people do not benefit, what can we do? We give but sometimes they don't work and they don't get it. Again compassion, again give; that's all. Don't become disappointed when people do not work properly and do not get what they should. If we cry about it, then we have attachment that more people should benefit from Dhamma. Of course they should benefit and so we do our best. We keep on giving without expecting anything, and certainly this will have its own good result.

Initial difficulties are bound to occur because people have their own mental conditioning, so they will see things through coloured lenses. I faced a lot of suspicion about Vipassana when I started here in India. Some thought, "Look, this person's motive certainly is to convert people." If one has a sectarian mind one will always see everything as sectarian. There are people in this country who come and establish hospitals, schools and different social institutes, and then after a few years of service they start to convert the people who come there to their religion. Naturally, because such things have happened, people started feeling, "Look! This fellow has come from Burma and he serves people in the same way. Yes, people get peace and happiness, they come out of drugs or alcohol or other problems. This is wonderful. But his ultimate aim is to convert everybody to Buddhism."

Well, one smiles. If this were really one's intention, one would become agitated, thinking, "Look, my clever scheme has been discovered. Now how will I be successful?" But if the mind is pure one feels, "Let people talk. If not today, they will understand tomorrow." The pure Dhamma spreads only in this way.

Similarly in Western countries, naturally there is hesitation. Some think, "Look, a foreign religion is coming to our country. These people will make slaves of our countrymen." The doubt is quite natural because such things do happen. But our intentions are purely to serve, to give people something which will make them happy without converting them to any religion, dogma or belief. And if this aim is not polluted, success will eventually come.

A time is bound to come for the wider spread of Dhamma despite these initial difficulties,

provided the technique is kept pure and provided the intention of those who are giving this technique to others is also kept pure. This is very important. We are merely vehicles, and if the vehicle is good more people will benefit. On the other hand if somebody is playing an ego game in the name of spreading Dhamma, naturally Dhamma will drive this person away.

It is bound to spread, the time has ripened now. There is so much misery in India with its many sects. In the name of *dharma* sects are fighting with each other, killing each other—what a tragedy! And the same thing is happening not only in this country, but everywhere around the world, "My religion, my religion," without understanding what Dhamma is. This is the need of the day. Everywhere misery is increasing because people don't understand what Dhamma is. If they learn what it is this will be a much better world. And slowly this is bound to happen. In spite of all the darkness existing now, this light, this small light of Dhamma has come, and it is bound to grow.

Exactly as it is essential to have schools, colleges, hospitals, gymnasiums, etc., throughout society, similarly a time is bound to come when there will be a Vipassana centre in every village in the world. People will start understanding that this is necessary. As we learn physical exercise by going to a gymnasium, we will learn this mental exercise at a meditation centre. It has nothing to do with any cult. This is an exercise to keep the mind healthy, wholesome and pure so that we live a good life and can help others to live a good life. This is the purpose of Dhamma.

If this purpose remains clear and the technique remains very pure, Dhamma is bound to spread. The darkness all around is bound to be dispelled. The misery all around is bound to be eradicated. Real peace will come, real harmony, real happiness. May all enjoy real peace, real harmony, real happiness.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

DHAMMA DHARA, USA & DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JULY, 1991 & APRIL, 1992
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (ON DHAMMA SERVICE)

Questioner: Goenkaji, why is it so important to maintain the Five Precepts on Dhamma land?

Goenkaji: It is important to observe the Five Precepts everywhere but it is especially important on Dhamma land.

The first reason is that it is so difficult to observe these precepts in the outside world. In daily life there are many reasons why people break their *sīla.* But on Dhamma land, where there is a wonderful Dhamma atmosphere, the influence of Māra is much weaker than in the outside world, so you should take advantage of this to strengthen yourself in *sīla.* If you cannot observe *sīla* in an atmosphere like this, how can you expect to maintain *sīla* in the world? How will you develop in Dhamma?

Secondly, it is meritorious to observe *sīla* anywhere, but observing *sīla* on Dhamma land is more meritorious. Equally, it is harmful to break *sīla* anywhere, but breaking *sīla* on Dhamma land is more harmful. Understand why this is so. As soon as a defilement is generated in the mind you contribute a bad vibration to the atmosphere, and you can't break any *sīla* unless some impurity first comes in the mind and then manifests as an unwholesome action of speech or body. If you generate that kind of vibration in a marketplace full of unhealthy vibrations, you contribute something bad to the atmosphere, no doubt. But it is already full of bad vibrations, so your contribution is inconspicuous—just as a new stain on a dirty shirt is inconspicuous. But if you generate mental defilements in the good atmosphere of a centre, you pollute the atmosphere in the same way that even a tiny spot of dirt spoils a clean white shirt.

The mind doesn't stay idle; it generates either impurity or purity. When you don't generate impurity you generate purity, good vibrations, and these are your positive contributions to the atmosphere. After all, how does land become Dhamma land? By the meditation of good-hearted people generating good vibrations, which permeate the atmosphere. This is your *dāna* to the centre, and it is far superior to material *dāna.*

The more people who meditate in one place, the stronger the vibration becomes. And the good vibrations at a Dhamma centre are helpful not only to those who attend the present courses; they also accumulate. This atmosphere of pure Dhamma will support students for generations, for centuries. You don't know who will come to your centre after five or ten generations, after centuries. What a wonderful gift you are giving to those unknown people. Your *dāna* is wonderful.

Equally, the negative vibrations you generate are harmful not only to the present meditators, but also to future meditators who won't get the

strong, good atmosphere that they should. That is why it is important to observe *sīla* on Dhamma land. It is fruitful for the one who generates good vibrations by observing *sīla,* and fruitful for others now and in the future. Therefore observe *sīla.* It is the foundation of Dhamma. Keep this foundation strong. ❧

We feel that the hardest *sīla* for us to observe when we are serving is right speech. As Dhamma servers it is difficult to avoid engaging in idle chatter or gossip, and sometimes we unwittingly spread misinformation or negativity. Also, private information about students is sometimes discussed. Can you guide us as to how to practise right speech?

Idle talk is a form of wrong speech; you are breaking your *sīla* by indulging in idle talk and gossip. If somebody wants to gossip, they had better leave the Dhamma centre. Here, as the Buddha repeatedly used to say, have either Dhamma talk or *tuṇhībhāvo*—noble silence, complete silence, nothing else. Otherwise, all the types of wrong speech that you mentioned are bound to occur. When you are chatting idly your mind is so loose that the talk becomes looser and looser, and you won't care what you are saying, with the result that you may create difficulties for other students. This must be totally avoided. ❧

Sometimes when we are serving a course, the topic of other techniques and therapies comes up naturally in conversation.

Just as gossip comes up naturally! Take out this "naturally" business! Whenever something wrong happens, people say it is happening "naturally." Change that!

Some students find these conversations helpful in clarifying differences between Vipassana and other methods.

The conversations may also be helpful in creating confusion, so leave aside such clarification. You can discuss that sort of thing outside the centre, but not at the centre; not at any cost. ❧

Goenkaji, could you please clarify how Dhamma service helps us to develop our *pāramīs?*

Dhamma service is actually one of the *pāramīs,* because a server contributes to the *dāna* of Dhamma. People come here to receive the Dhamma and your service ensures that this gift of Dhamma can occur. Of the ten *pāramīs, dāna* is one of the greatest, and *dhammadāna* is the highest form of that *dāna.* The Buddha said, *Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*—The highest *dāna* is the *dāna* of Dhamma.

When you give *dāna* to a hospital, a school or an orphanage, people benefit—it is a *pāramī*—but later on the recipients will once again lack medicine, food or clothing. If you give monetary *dāna* to a place where Dhamma is taught, it is more valuable because the Dhamma gives people the path from misery to liberation, and nothing compares to that. So donating to an organization or a centre that gives Dhamma is a valuable *pāramī,* but the *pāramī* of *dāna* is even more valuable when you give physical service.

What, after all, is *pāramī*? It is just a mental volition. Before you give a monetary *dāna* you feel, "Ah, wonderful, my money will be used for a very good purpose!" That volition becomes your *pāramī*. But when you give service for ten long days—whether you are cooking, managing, or sweeping the floor—you keep thinking, "Look, by my service so many people are benefiting. How can I help so that they can work peacefully, without any obstacles or hindrances?" This wonderful volition continues for the whole ten days.

So the *dāna* of Dhamma service is higher than the *dāna* of money. We don't say that giving money is bad, no. It is important, it is good, and it gives very good results. But giving service is many times more fruitful because you generate *mettā* and goodwill for such a long time. Every moment during service your *pāramī* is developing. So to me Dhamma service is the greatest *dāna*.

But when you serve on a ten-day course you have an opportunity to develop all the other *pāramīs* too, not only the *dāna pāramī*.

While giving service there will be times when the students are agitated and negative because a deep operation is going on, and they throw this agitation at you. You smile and understand, "Oh, this person is miserable." You don't react with negativity but generate *mettā* for them, so your *khanti pāramī,* the *pāramī* of tolerance, becomes stronger, and your *mettā pāramī* becomes stronger. Then two or three times a day you meditate and your *paññā pāramī* is strengthened.

Similarly for the *pāramīs* of *sīla, nekkhamma* [renunciation], *viriya* [effort], *sacca* [truthfulness], *adhiṭṭhāna* [strong determination], and *upekkhā* [equanimity]—all are strengthened by giving Dhamma service.

When you sit a course you deal only with yourself, but when you serve you learn how to deal with others and how to live properly in the outside world. You may have practised Vipassana diligently and maintained equanimity towards all sensations, but you are not supposed to live in a glass house. You have to apply Dhamma in the world outside, and that is not easy. In a centre you are in a protected, healthy, wholesome atmosphere and that gives you the strength to apply Vipassana to face the vicissitudes of life.

I know from my own experience and also from that of others who have started giving Dhamma service, that meditation improves after serving. The meditation is deeper, the equanimity is stronger, and there is more *mettā*. This is because the *pāramīs* have increased by giving Dhamma service. In every way Dhamma service gives wonderful results. ❧

Sometimes on a course we find that for one reason or another conflicts arise between Dhamma servers. How can we best use our service to confront our own egos and to develop humility?

When you are not able to keep your mind calm, quiet, full of love and compassion for others, and negativity arises, you should retire from service. You may say, "It's not my fault, the other person is to blame." Whatever the truth is, it is your fault that you have started generating negativity. You have become involved in

conflict with others, so you should understand that you are not fit to serve at that time. You had better meditate. Sit and meditate. You can't serve people when you are generating negativity because you would throw the vibration of negativity at them.

If you find there is a fault with another server, politely and humbly place your view before him or her. Calmly explain your concerns and sincerely try to understand the other's point of view. If this person doesn't change, after some time you can again politely and humbly explain your concern. Perhaps the other person still doesn't agree, but I would say explaining your view twice is enough. In very rare cases you can discuss the problem a third time, but never more than that. Otherwise, however correct your view may be, raising the same concern more than three times shows that you have developed a tremendous amount of attachment; you want things to happen according to your understanding. That is wrong. Explain your concern once, twice, at most three times, and if there is still no change politely tell him or her, "Well, this is my understanding, now let's put the question to a senior."

But before putting the case to anybody else, first talk with the person with whom you have a difference of opinion. After that you can inform your seniors—whether it is a senior student, the trustees, an assistant teacher, a senior assistant teacher, the local teacher or the Teacher. Remember that first you have to discuss the problem with the person concerned. If you work in this way there will be no unwholesome speech; otherwise there would be backbiting, which is wrong.

If nothing happens and this person does not amend their ways, don't have aversion for them, have more compassion. Always examine yourself. If you feel agitated because something you want is not being done, it is clear that your ego is strong and your attachment to your ego is predominant. This is not Dhamma. Amend yourself before trying to amend others. ❧

Sometimes it seems that we are picking up negativity, fear, etc. from the students we are serving. How does this happen and what can we do?

You can't pick up anything from others. If you are affected by a student's emotions, it is because you have a stock of the same kind of impurity within you. For example, if a fear complex comes to the surface in a student because of their practice of Vipassana, the atmosphere around them will become charged with that kind of vibration and that stimulates your own stock of fear to arise. Be thankful to the student that this situation has allowed your own impurity to be eradicated. Meditate, observe sensations, and come out of it. Why worry?

While you are here in this atmosphere, you can work on anything that comes up and eradicate it. If you are free from a particular impurity, nothing will happen when you come in contact with that impurity. Let's say somebody generates anger near a Buddha, anger would not arise in the Buddha because he is totally free from anger. So long as you have the seed

of a particular impurity within you, when the same impurity arises in your vicinity it will stimulate your own impurity. ❧

Why are both students and Dhamma servers asked to refrain from physical contact with others at a course site or centre, whether a course is going on or not? Can't physical contact also be a way of expressing *mettā*?

You say physical contact is just an expression of *mettā*, but that is slippery ground because you don't know when you will get caught in passion. It is very important to avoid this danger. There can be no justification for physical contact at a centre.

People keep telling me that in the West physical contact doesn't involve passion. Maybe not always, but I have seen cases in the West where a student on a course started having physical contact saying it was without passion, and ultimately it resulted in an unhealthy situation.

You have to be especially cautious because you are working on Dhamma land, and the anti-Dhamma forces will always try to pull you down. You are representing Dhamma. If you have any little weakness (and passion is a great weakness) these anti-Dhamma vibrations will arouse passion in you, and you will spoil the entire atmosphere. So you'd better avoid any kind of physical contact. However people may justify it, don't listen to their arguments. It is a strict rule in every Dhamma centre or even at a non-centre course that no physical contact is allowed. ❧

When students are serving on courses or staying at centres, they might feel an attraction to a person with whom they would like to establish a relationship, and hopefully, a Dhamma partnership. How should students who are at the beginning stages or later stages of a new relationship conduct themselves when they are serving on courses or at centres?

It must be very clear that Dhamma land is not the proper place for any kind of courtship—whether it is the early or the later stage of a relationship makes no difference. If any Dhamma server finds that he or she is becoming attracted towards another person they should immediately leave, they should not stay at the centre even for a minute. Develop your romantic relationships outside the Dhamma centre. At a Dhamma centre you have to behave towards each other like brothers and sisters. Even a trace of passion arising in the mind of anyone will disturb the atmosphere of the centre, and this has to be avoided at all costs. It should be made crystal clear to every Dhamma server that a Dhamma centre is not a place for courtship. ❧

Why is it necessary to maintain segregation of sexes on the courses and at the centres?

For the same reason as given above. Passion is the greatest weakness, and it will find some way or the other to express itself unless you maintain segregation. So it is better to remain segregated. This is healthy both for you and for the students who have come for the course. ❧

While I am serving when should I practise Anapana? When should I practise Vipassana? And when should I practise *mettā*?

This is a good question. Instead of sitting the course, you are serving, and so you should decide how to work just as you do in your daily practice at home. You have to decide whether you should start by practising Anapana or work with Vipassana straight away, and if you do start with Anapana you have to decide for how long. That is at the discretion of each server. If you feel that your *samādhi* is very weak and you want to strengthen it by doing Anapana for the first three days and then switch over to Vipassana, this is acceptable.

Most important is that you meditate two times or three times per day while you are working on Dhamma land. If you don't sit you won't be able to give proper service, you won't generate good vibrations. So in your own interest, and also in the interest of the students whom you are serving, it is essential that you sit.

One difficulty has been noticed. Sometimes, even if there are very few Dhamma servers on a course, each one wants to meditate with closed eyes during the group sittings. That is wrong; you are a Dhamma server here, not a student.

During the sittings one or two of you should keep your eyes open and see if the students have any difficulties. Of course, if there are many servers you can divide the responsibility amongst yourselves: One or two females and one or two males keep their eyes open while the others meditate seriously, there's nothing wrong with that. But if all the servers meditate with closed eyes you create difficulties because the teacher cannot get your attention if he or she needs assistance. That should be avoided. ❧

When we have the Dhamma workers' *mettā* session at 9:00 p.m., why are we asked to put our attention at the top of the head?

This is a good question. According to the law of nature there is a flow of energy coming out of the extremities [the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, and the top of the head], especially when you meditate. If you are a good meditator there is a constant flow going out, which also contains certain impurities. But one extremity—the top of the head—also has the capacity to draw vibrations from the atmosphere; the other extremities cannot do that.

While you are being given *mettā,* you are receiving good Dhamma vibrations. If your attention is at the top of the head and you start feeling sensations there, it means the top extremity is open at that time. At the same time you have to maintain the mental volition to accept any good vibrations that are coming. If your mind is calm and as pure as possible, you will get tuned up with the *mettā* vibrations and they can be received at the top of the head. This is why this area is given so much importance. ❧

If a student is having a storm and the assistant teacher is not immediately available, can we, as Dhamma servers, help the student by giving meditation instructions—for example, saying to use more Anapana and to work on the extremities, or to work in a more relaxed way by lying down or taking a walk?

That would be risky. You must understand that when somebody is authorized to give Dhamma as an assistant teacher or a senior or a full-fledged teacher, the good vibrations associated with Dhamma come in contact with this person while they are sitting on the Dhamma seat, and that helps the students.

A server is not an authorized teacher, and should never play the role of teacher because the AT is supposedly unavailable. You may think, "Somebody is in trouble so I'd better give advice," but be very careful not to do so. At most you can say, "Go and lie down and relax. When the teacher is available, I will ask you to meet him or her." That is not a technique, and has nothing to do with the practice. Don't say anything more than that; don't try to give any instructions. There is every possibility that your instructions might create difficulty for the student. Authorization and establishing contact with the Dhamma vibrations play an important part in the work done by the assistant teachers. ❧

When we are serving courses or staying at centres, we are asked to restrict our reading either to materials related to the Buddha's teaching or to newspapers and magazines. Students often ask why they cannot read other things that they feel are compatible with Vipassana. Can you explain the reason behind this rule?

Who has the authority to say that this book is compatible, and that one is not? You can't expect the assistant teacher to go through all the literature that you bring. You'd better leave aside all your books. You can read them outside the centre. Why disturb the atmosphere here?

A server should always keep in mind that he or she is staying at a centre in order to help build good vibrations there. If you want to read certain books that might go against the vibrations of the centre, it is better that you leave. It is difficult to build up a Dhamma atmosphere, and we want it to become so strong that it will be helpful for generations, even for centuries. Be careful not to disturb it; it is not healthy to risk disturbing the atmosphere on any pretext. ❧

What should I do if I have a big storm but need to finish my work because there is nobody else to do it? If I am really having a hard time as a long-term server, when is it best to meditate more and when is it best to leave the centre?

The assistant teacher on duty is in the best position to give you guidance. You'd better meet him or her and discuss your situation. ❧

Dhamma servers commonly do not get enough exercise while they are serving. Is it permissible for them to practise yoga while serving a course or staying at a centre?

The physical exercises of yoga are quite compatible with Vipassana, but don't do them at the centres; the students would get distracted if they see you. It is unwholesome to create any hindrance to the progress of the students. If a Dhamma server has a separate room there should not be any difficulty about doing yoga exercises there as long as they do not disturb

anybody. But even then, permission must be sought from the assistant teacher on duty; only if the assistant teacher is satisfied that yoga will not become a disturbance can it be done, otherwise not. Walking is good enough exercise. ❧

mum and afterwards there were complaints about this. We cannot please everybody, some will remain discontented. We have to serve as best we can, and you have to serve as best you can as Dhamma servers. ❧

When you are teaching in English, why do you use Pāli and Hindi words in your chanting and your discourses?

Well, these words are so pleasant to me. Pāli is the language of the Enlightened Person, and Hindi is my mother tongue. They also create a good vibration for the students to meditate in. In the English discourses I am cautious and try to use them as little as possible, but in the Hindi discourses Pāli verses are very helpful. They give inspiration, and Pāli becomes easy to understand for many Indian students after taking only a few courses.

However, even in the West old students keep telling me, "When you recite a Pāli *gāthā* [verse] we feel good vibrations." A new student may not agree with this; he or she might have aversion and think, "What is this chanting? Why is he disturbing me?" But slowly this person will start to understand the benefits.

Last time the ten discourses in English were recorded the Pāli *gāthās* were reduced to a minimum and afterwards there were complaints about this. We cannot please everybody, some will remain discontented. We have to serve as best we can, and you have to serve as best you can as Dhamma servers. ❧

Is there any purpose behind the old students' chanting of *sādhu* and bowing, or is this just a rite or ritual?

They are not part of a rite or a ritual. As I said earlier, the extremity at the top of the head can receive vibrations. When a teacher expresses *mettā* by saying *Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ,* he or she generates good vibrations, and when you bow down you accept those vibrations of *mettā* at the top of the head. It is in your own interest to accept good vibrations. If you are thirsty and somebody offers you water, you will get the water only if you cup your hands together. If you keep your hands apart the water will be lost.

Saying *sādhu* is an expression of sympathetic joy, and you join with the teacher's feeling of joy when you say this. Both bowing and saying *sādhu* are in your own interest, they are not part of any rite or ritual. They are a healthy tradition from the past. Make use of them. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 1992
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: I am a college student and I come here for Vipassana meditation. When I go back, my teacher says, "You are too young to practise meditation." What should I do in such a situation?

Goenkaji: You are not at fault; your teacher is mistaken. There is a wrong concept in our country that things like meditation should be practised in the fourth and last period of life. This is wrong. At that time the body becomes very weak, the mind becomes weak, all the sense organs become weak—you cannot practise properly. Actually, yours is the age when one should start practising meditation because it is an art of living. Then through the rest of one's life this meditation will be so helpful. So continue to meditate whatever your teacher says. Don't worry. ❧

Quite often it is necessary to take strong action. But as you say, this should be done with *mettā* and compassion. On such occasions, if *mettā* and compassion are not generated, should one then take no action? If so, the wrongdoer could be encouraged. What should be done in such situations?

Never encourage injustice. One has to oppose injustice, but with the base of *mettā* and *karuṇā*. If you oppose someone without this base, don't justify it. Understand that this was your defect, and the next time any such thing happens you will try to generate *mettā* and *karuṇā,* and oppose the injustice with that base. If you keep justifying your mistakes, you can't rectify yourself. ❧

What is the definition of sin?

Whatever defiles our mind is a sin. All vocal or bodily actions which disturb the peace and harmony of others, which harm others, first defile one's own mind. Only then will one perform unwholesome actions. These are all sinful actions. ❧

Much Dhamma literature is coming out in English from VRI. Please give importance to Hindi. The Buddha gave his teaching in the local language. Our view is that all work should be done in Hindi. What is your policy in this regard?

If Hindi were the language of the entire world then yes, we should work only in Hindi. But this is not the case. There are many people around the world who speak English. For them, the meditation instructions must be in English. To offer literature in the English language does not go against the teaching of the Buddha. It is true that we have to work in this country where Hindi is the national language, and

already quite a bit of literature has been published in Hindi. Certainly we would like more and more writers of Hindi to translate things that have already been published in English, as well as write original things with the basis of the Buddha's teaching. ❧

Sometimes someone offers to donate land for a centre but wishes to keep a portion of it for their own use. In such situations, what should our policy be?

To accept a situation where the donor is living next door and has given part of his or her land for establishing a meditation centre should never be done in future. We have already made three such mistakes and that is enough. Every time someone gives land which is near to his or her own residence, at a deep unconscious level there is a feeling, "This is my land, which I have given." And then, as the centre grows, a tendency develops to have some kind of control over it, which has given a lot of difficulties. In future, whether I am here or not, such donations should never be accepted. ❧

What qualities do you take into consideration in the appointment of assistant teachers and trustees?

A long list of qualities, but I keep them private. However, I would like to say something that disqualifies somebody from becoming an assistant teacher or a trustee. If someone is eager to become a teacher, eager to become a trustee, a secretary, a manager, eager to have some position, status or power, then a red line is marked under the name of this person. Such a person is not fit to serve in the field of Dhamma. Somebody who has the volition, "I want to serve and I am willing to serve in any position. If I am asked to stand as a watchman, I will serve as a watchman; if you ask me to sweep the latrine, I will sweep the latrine"—and he or she does that, then this person is fit. One day, as he or she develops other qualities, such a person can reach the highest position. Dhamma service is not to develop the ego. It is to dissolve the ego. ❧

A number of Western Vipassana teachers of other traditions, as well as Western psychologists, are saying that Vipassana is not enough to deal with life's problems, and that psychological therapy is necessary because it teaches one how to deal with painful emotions and helps translate meditation experiences.

This is what other Vipassana teachers say. It is their problem, not ours. There is no comparison between the two. Vipassana takes you to such a depth! Mankind has not found a psychotherapist to compare with the Buddha. He found a technique that takes one to such a depth that the mind is purified at the deepest level. Trying to add something is only done by people who have not understood Vipassana, who have not practised Vipassana properly. Vipassana, Dhamma, is *kevalaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ*—it is complete, there is nothing to be added to it. And it is *kevalaṃ parisuddham*—so pure that nothing should be taken out of it. Any kind of mixture will be harmful. ❧

What actually happens when we are practising Vipassana and we take our attention to the extremities? Does anything actually leave the body, or is this an illusion? Why use these four extremities in particular?

Well, impurities do leave, but not because you have come to the extremities. They leave because you are equanimous: You are with the sensation and you are equanimous. The reason we ask people to take their attention to the extremities is that, generally on the extremities one does not experience a sensation which is unpleasant or which will make this person lose the balance of the mind. At other places there might be different kinds of sensations which may cause someone to lose the balance of the mind. But these extremities are such that one feels either neutral sensations or pleasant sensations there. You see, when the mind is more and more equanimous—because it is aware of sensations—then purity is possible. This is the whole logic and science of it. ❧

What is the use of Buddha images to a serious practitioner of Vipassana? The archaeological evidence indicates that there were no Buddha statues until hundreds of years after the Buddha. Yet even this, the most non-sectarian of traditions, has a connection with statues. Is there any significance in some of the ceremonies that Buddhists perform each year by offering food to invisible beings?

We have not asked you to offer food to invisible beings, nor have we asked you to go and perform any rites and rituals before Buddha statues, but why have negativity towards others who do it? Let them do it, there is nothing wrong. If somebody pays respect to a statue of the Buddha, understanding that one pays respect to the qualities of Buddha, getting inspiration to develop those qualities, there is nothing wrong with that. But this cannot be a part of the practice of Vipassana. We don't have this in our teachings, so don't worry. ❧

When students make gross body movements while doing Vipassana, assistant teachers usually tell them to stop. Often students will point out that Sayagyi thought it all right for one of his students to stand on his head in his cell and shake, etc. Are gross body movements in one's cell all right if they don't disturb others? Or should they be discouraged in the cell as well as in the hall?

Well, if your Sayagyi says carry on, then carry on. But your Sayagyi is not saying this. It depends on the teacher. If he understands that a particular student has a background where allowing this violent reaction will be helpful, it won't take this person to a wrong path, then he gives such guidance.

Understand, this is a very delicate thing. Only a very experienced teacher can make such a decision. Normally the Buddha's path is a path of peace. If you have violent reactions in the body and you expect to reach the stage which is full of peace, how is that possible? So discourage this violent reaction; this is the proper thing to do. When you reach the stage of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, then you can select a student and say, "All right, stand on your shoulders and keep on shaking," not otherwise. ❧

Vipassana and Western psychology are both concerned with the study of the mind and human nature. Can these traditions be used as complementary forms of self-discovery?

Complementary at a very initial stage; but as you proceed, Vipassana takes you to the depth of the mind. I am not here to denounce what you have achieved in the West, but as far as the psychology and psychotherapy of the West are concerned, these are still at a very superficial level. At a deeper level, any kind of combination of them with Vipassana will be harmful. ❧

When someone is in a coma—i.e., unconscious—can any wholesome mind moments arise, or are they all mind moments of ignorance? Does everyone that dies in an unconscious state automatically take birth in a lower plane?

I can't answer from my personal experience, but certainly when someone is in coma and unconscious, you can't expect any wholesome volition to arise in the mind. It's more a stage of ignorance, *moha*. But this is not so in every case. Just two days back, I was in contact with a case where someone had had a serious stroke and was in a coma in the intensive care ward. He was a Vipassana meditator. He was unconscious, and when *mettā* was given, very strong shivering went through his body. This means he accepted the *mettā*; the vibration was there, very strong. The next day when *mettā* was given, he came out of it—he became semi-conscious. Again *mettā* was given, and he came out of his problems to some extent. Then he was asked, "Yesterday, when *mettā* was given to you, could you feel it?" He replied, "No."

In the state of coma, there is a barrier between one part of the mind and the other. This person still felt the *mettā* unconsciously because his body responded to the vibration—there was clear evidence of this—and he started improving. And yet when questioned he said he didn't know this. Now he is coming out of it, and he feels everything, so this shows that he has a seed of Dhamma which responds to a good Dhamma vibration.

We can't say that this happens in every case. But there might be cases where someone is a very good meditator and can accept good vibrations or even generate good vibrations at a very deep level of the mind, even though at the surface one looks to be fully unconscious. This is certainly possible, but to me it seems to be quite rare. So we should try not to die unconsciously. ❧

Could you please make a very clear statement concerning the problem of crows, dogs, cats and rats at centres? Currently people are petting and feeding and giving pet names to these animals.

No. Vipassana centres are not a place for feeding these animals, these beings. No. Certainly we will not ask anybody to kill them. You must have *mettā* and compassion for them, but try to drive them out. To keep them there and feed them will go against Dhamma, it will create a disturbance. Have *mettā* and drive them away. ❧

Can you talk about the mechanism of transference of merit? If the person receiving the merits didn't have the volition to do the good deed, can they absorb the merits?

If someone is thirsty and you offer water to him, but this fellow does not make a cup with his hands to take the water—he keeps his hands open, and the water drains off—what can be done? There must be some volition on the part of the person to take a share of the merits. If one is not accepting these merits, it is meaningless. Suppose you are like a broadcasting station and you give *mettā* to someone whose receiver is not good enough to receive it, then it is a waste. Even so, the one who is on the giving end should keep giving. If the one on the receiving end is not capable of receiving, this is the problem of that person. But if one is capable of receiving, then certainly sharing merits helps. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 16, 1992
CLOSING ADDRESS

THE AMITY OF DHAMMA

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

So much work has been done to help the spread of Dhamma in the last twenty-one years. Yet without wanting to devalue it, the work done is just a very tiny step on a long journey. A tiny step has been taken, but it is a very important step because it is in the right direction, on the right path. The time has now ripened and Dhamma is bound to spread, it has started to spread. Everyone should feel very fortunate in having an opportunity to participate in the spread of Dhamma, helping people to come out of their misery.

The work is growing. A great deal of service is needed, and it is good that a large number of people are coming forward to serve, but unless you serve yourself, you can't serve others. A lame person cannot support another lame person. A blind person cannot guide another blind person. The Buddha said, "I guarantee your liberation, but with one condition: that you rid yourself of ego." If someone comes to serve people and does nothing to eradicate his or her own ego, then where is the service? If you want to help people to come out of bondage, out of misery, and you are doing nothing to liberate yourself from bondage and from misery—if you are doing nothing to dissolve your own ego—then certainly this service will not be a Dhamma service. You have to dissolve your ego. There are many other fields where we can gain material benefits, but in Dhamma leave aside material gain. This is not the place or the field to look for name and fame, for power or for status.

The Buddha said that two types of people are rare. One type is the person who serves, who takes initiative in serving, which means that there is no thought in the mind about anything other than service. Instead, such a person thinks, *bahujana-hitāya, bahujana-sukhāya*—my service is to help others, more and more people should benefit from it. The second type is the person who has a feeling of gratitude. Develop these two qualities and certainly you are progressing on the path, certainly you are fit to help others.

The organization is growing. But as it grows it is quite possible that differences of opinion will come, personality clashes might start, there may be attachment to personal opinions. One has to be very careful. This is like fire; don't allow the fire to start. But if it has begun, see that it is extinguished immediately. Don't allow it to spread. Always remember Buddha's words:

Vivādaṃ bhayato disvā,
avivādañ ca khemato,
samaggā sakhilā hotha,
esā buddhānusāsanī.

Seeing danger in dispute,
security in concord,
dwell together in amity—
this is the teaching of the Enlightened One.

If you find a fault in somebody certainly you should go and tell him or her—humbly, with *mettā* and compassion, "Well, I feel this action of yours is not according to Dhamma." Try to convince them, but if they are not convinced don't generate negativity—instead generate more compassion. Try again, and if again this person doesn't understand then inform an elder, let the elder try. If this is not successful, let another elder try. If this is not successful, have compassion for this person.

If you have anger and hatred, how can you help someone? You have not even helped yourself. Be careful. Remember, *vivadaṃ bhayato disvā*—it is a frightening situation where you create animosity or controversy. This is a family and a member of the family has become weak. The entire family should help to make this person strong. Don't condemn them or try to push them out. This person requires our compassion, not our hatred.

If we continue to have this attitude then Dhamma remains with us all the time because we have started helping ourselves first. There should be nothing but love and compassion. This should become the guideline for every Dhamma server.

Now about research: The words of the Buddha are lost in many countries, and we should be grateful to the countries that maintained them in their pristine purity. These words of the Buddha have to spread in order to help *paṭipatti* [meditation practice]. The *pariyatti* [theory], the publication of *pariyatti*, the research in *pariyatti* should not become our main aim. Our main aim will always be *paṭipatti*. If we remain satisfied only with reading the words of the Buddha, but do nothing to take steps on the path he taught, then again we have started harming ourselves. The theoretical aspect of Dhamma, the words of the Buddha, are to help us, to encourage us, to guide us, but the main thing will always be to walk on the path step by step. Make use of the words of the Buddha and they will certainly encourage you.

I recommend that every student of Vipassana learns at least basic Pāli, the words spoken by Buddha. I speak from my own experience. Every word of the Enlightened One is so inspiring, provided you continue your meditation practice. You have to make your own research of the truth inside, research about the interaction of mind and matter inside—how out of ignorance one keeps on reacting, how in wisdom one comes out of it. This is how the words of the Buddha can be used for your own liberation.

Suffering is all around, misery is all around. May this wonderful medicine of the Buddha help the suffering people to come out of their illness, to come out of their misery. May the light of Dhamma spread around the world, dispelling the darkness of ignorance.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA THALI, INDIA
JANUARY 1, 1993
OPENING ADDRESS

DHAMMA: LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

My dear Vipassana meditators:

As every year, we have again assembled to review whatever we have done, to find whether there have been any defects, and to understand how to eradicate those defects. We review whatever has been attained, not to develop ego, but with a balanced understanding; and we see how this success can be increased. Last, we meet to make practical plans for the future. This meeting should not be like other ordinary social gatherings where people debate, pass resolutions, and forget all about it. No! The practical aspect of Dhamma is of utmost importance to us.

That is why, before starting this annual meeting, most of you participated in a long course, and after the meeting many others of you will do so. This is a good sign. You are giving more importance to the practice, and discussions are based on this foundation. This healthy tradition should be maintained in the future; otherwise our service to suffering humanity will not be successful.

There is suffering, it cannot be denied. All around there is darkness and suffering. People are miserable, and they are groping about in the darkness, not knowing how to come out of misery. Throughout the world in the name of different religions there are conflicts, struggles and wars. Unfortunately this country, which takes pride in being the land of origin of the pure Dhamma, is also suffering from such conflicts. When the darkness is very deep, it invites light. The way to come out of misery arises from the deepest misery.

It is good that the light has come and that the way is becoming clearer. In the last years a beginning has been made. People have started examining the technique and have found that it gives results. Intelligent, wise people—intellectuals from different communities, sects, countries and traditions—have come to the Ganges of Vipassana, taken a dip and found that it is truly refreshing and fruitful.

Every step on the path has to be examined at the intellectual level: Is it rational, pragmatic and reasonable? And then at the actual level of practice: Is it fruitful, is it giving benefit here and now? The path leads you to the goal where you become totally liberated, an *arahant*. That is good, but what result does it give now? It is a long path to reach the final goal of becoming an *arahant*; is one coming out of misery now? Everyone who walks on the path finds it is fruitful. Of course the fruits differ from person to person according to one's own past accumulations and according to how one works now, but the path is fruitful.

Vipassana cannot be spread by discussions, nor merely by writing articles, giving lectures or trying to prove at the intellectual level that ours

is the best. No, it won't help. It is only by the actual results. There is suffering all around, let people know that there is a way out. And you can do that only by your own way of life. If people find that there is a change for the better in you, that you have attained something which you were missing, they will be attracted. This is how Dhamma will spread.

Just as every town must have schools, colleges, hospitals and gymnasiums, similarly Vipassana will become a necessity throughout the world. There must be some place where mental training is given to control and purify the mind, and there should be no fear that attending these courses will convert people to a particular religion or sect. It would be a great danger to the spread of Dhamma if Vipassana courses converted people to a particular organized religion. It would no longer be Vipassana. Going to a school, hospital or gymnasium one is not converted from one religion to another, and so it is going to a Vipassana course. Vipassana is free from sectarianism. That must become clearer in the minds of those who want to teach it, and clear in the minds of those who want to practise it. If this is missing, then everything will be missing.

The purity of the path is to keep it universal. It has been universal and it should remain universal in the future. It is helpful to one and all. Anyone and everyone who practises is bound to benefit. This is a very important message that should reach the world. And it is possible to spread this message when you yourself show that you have not been converted from one religion to another, but the impurities that you had in the mind are being eradicated by this technique and you have started coming out of your misery. This will be the best example of the value of Dhamma.

Another important thing that we have started doing is making the theoretical aspect of Dhamma more widely available. Because the practice was lost in many countries, the meaning of some of the Buddha's words was not clear and the interpretations were wrong. It is important for a meditator to understand the theoretical aspect of Dhamma in order to see whether what we are practising is correct.

The theoretical aspect of Dhamma will support the practice of Dhamma. But understand that this should not become our main aim. Out of over-enthusiasm if we start giving too much importance to the theoretical aspect of Dhamma, and forget the practical part, we will miss everything. This practical aspect of Dhamma is of utmost importance. Keeping this in mind, we have to research the theoretical aspect of Dhamma.

May all of you become flag-bearers of Dhamma, torch-bearers of Dhamma. Take the message of Dhamma throughout the world to help people to come out of their misery.

Generate nothing but compassion, love and goodwill to help more and more people to come out of their misery. We have nothing to do with these organized religions. We have nothing to do with this sectarianism. The suffering, the malady, is universal, and here is a remedy which is also universal. See that it remains universal, and helps people to come out of their misery.

May more and more people come in contact with Dhamma. May more and more people start coming out of their misery. May more and more people start experiencing real peace, real harmony.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA THALI, INDIA
JANUARY 3, 1993
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: How does one develop compassion in oneself and how do we encourage it in others?

Goenkaji: Compassion and purity go together. If there is no purity, you can't generate compassion. By practising Vipassana, you purify your mind, and that will help to develop your quality of compassion. To help others to generate compassion is difficult. We can't do anything to help others to develop their good qualities.

But still, there is a way to do both. When you practise Vipassana on a course you purify your mind, and then on the last day you practise *mettā*. Going back home, after you practise for one hour, you practise a few minutes of *mettā*. However, if you give ten days of your life to serve in a Vipassana course, then for all the ten days you get an opportunity to generate *mettā*, to generate compassion for all the students. And this is how one develops compassion.

This is also how you can help others to generate compassion, because you are helping them to practise Vipassana properly. And as they purify their minds by the practice of Vipassana, they also will start generating compassion. This is the only way I see. ❧

Is there such a thing as a purely physical affliction, or are all physical afflictions *saṅkhāras*?

Physical afflictions have many causes. *Saṅkhāra* is one amongst these many causes. For example, say the atmosphere, the climate, doesn't suit you and you start getting some unpleasant sensation in the body. Or you hit yourself, you fall down, break your leg, and you get an unpleasant sensation. Or you take some food which doesn't suit you and you get unpleasant sensations. In this way, there are many reasons, of which *saṅkhāra* is one.

Not all the sensations you experience in the body are because of your past *kammas*. But in a very broad sense, we can say that all the sensations you feel are your *kamma-saṅkhāras*. Say a hot climate does not suit you and you go out in the burning sun and come back with a headache. This is your *kamma-saṅkhāra* of this present moment. You have acted in this way, and so you have to suffer. Or a certain food doesn't suit you, yet you have taken that food, and you feel pain as a result. This is your *saṅkhāra*, your present *saṅkhāra*.

When we talk of past *saṅkhāras* coming up to the surface, it doesn't mean that all the pains that you experience are due to these past *saṅkhāras*. ❧

You have always emphasized that we should have compassion towards the cruel. But in view of the large-scale violence and killing of innocent people that is going on all around,

what role can we perform as students of Vipassana, as Dhamma servers, trustees or ATs?

A very important question, no doubt. But at this stage, when Vipassana is just finding its roots, it is difficult. We don't have that much strength to try to change society.

There are two aspects of Dhamma. One aspect of Dhamma is purification of the individual. Another aspect is purification of the society. Both are important. But to purify the society, the purification of the person is a prerequisite. Unless individuals are purified—unless they have love, compassion and goodwill for others—we can't expect a true Dhammic society.

So at this stage we are trying to introduce Vipassana in India and the rest of the world. A time will certainly come when on a large scale, these very meditators can play a major role. But even now, individually, if people find that they can help in some kind of work to extinguish the fire, they can go ahead and do that. Help on a larger scale is difficult at this stage. We should not take on things which we can't manage. ❧

You have repeatedly clarified the principles that should govern the relationship between assistant teachers and trust members. It is found that some trusts want to work totally independent of any guidance from the ATs, to the point of excluding ATs from meetings and decision-making. There is a feeling that ATs have no role to play in guiding the trust. What degree of involvement is appropriate for assistant teachers in the running of centres?

Dhamma is a middle path. There are two problems which have come from the two extremes. A few years back, the problem was that many trust members came and complained, "In every meeting, the assistant teachers try to dominate and assert their viewpoint. They try to give orders, and we are helpless. We can't do anything." That was one extreme. Now I hear about another extreme, that they don't care about the assistant teachers and want to carry on in their own way.

A teacher should always be present. The assistant teachers of the area of the trust must always be present. They should be invited whenever a trust meeting is going on. But they should not interfere. Let the trustees discuss and make decisions. When an assistant teacher finds something which is going totally against Dhamma, then very politely they can point out, "No, this is not good, this is not Dhamma." But otherwise, in the mundane field, whatever things are happening, let them happen. Come out of these two extremes and have a middle path. It will be helpful to both the trustees and the assistant teachers. ❧

Some students still do not understand the significance of *dāna*. When courses are given freely, they tend to think, "Well, the services are free, why give *dāna*?" We seek your guidance on this problem.

There are two extremes. One extreme is that you charge for the food, lodging, etc., and you tell everybody, "These are the expenses for our service to you, so you must give us this much. Otherwise how can we run this organization?" This is prohibited. This is one extreme.

Now, another extreme is that you boast, "We don't take anything from you." Then people would think that perhaps a big foundation is behind the organization, or perhaps some government secret service is giving money for its own purpose, so why should they give *dāna* ?

Between these two extremes there should be a middle path. No charges should be made—this point should be very clear. But at the same time, the organization runs only on the *dāna* of the students. Those who benefit and feel that this ball should keep rolling for the good of others will automatically give a donation. Only when they give will this work continue. This point should be made very clear to the students, without pressing them for *dāna*.

There are cases, especially in this country, where people are so poor that every day they are living hand to mouth. They live solely by their meagre daily earnings. If such people come to a course for ten days, they lose their daily wages; that in itself is a big sacrifice. To expect any *dāna* from them is totally inhuman. If such a person gives even one rupee, it is very good, because this is a great *pāramī*, much greater than when a millionaire gives a thousand, or even one lakh rupees.

Leave it this way. But make this point very clear: Our organizations are run only on the free-will donations of the students, there is no other source of income. ❧

It is found that students drop out after one or two courses. How can this trend be prevented?

This is because of the fact that every individual has both good qualities as well as bad qualities. People come to Vipassana courses to strengthen their good qualities and to eradicate the bad ones. They get helped by Vipassana, in one or two courses.

But after all, they have such a big stock of bad qualities. These start overpowering them. When these impurities start overpowering a student, one understands fully well at the intellectual level that one should practise Vipassana to come out of misery. Yet because one is overpowered by one's own impurities, it becomes difficult. This is quite natural, we see this everywhere.

This will continue to some extent. People will progress slowly—they may take two steps and then fall down, and get up again; then again take two steps, and again fall down. Later they will reach the stage where they are so strong they can't fall down. It takes time.

As for the practical solution to the present problem there is one thing: Even if a student stops meditating every morning and evening, if they still come to a weekly group sitting, their battery will get charged and they will start working again. So this weekly sitting is very beneficial in helping to solve this problem. In every town, every village, every neighbourhood, there should be at least one person who can give time to remind people, "Tomorrow there is a weekly joint sitting." This will help people. Many of them do not come merely out of laziness. It is not that they are very busy or that something stops them from coming. If you simply encourage them, they will come.

Another thing we have found helpful is these one-day courses with Anapana, Vipassana, *mettā,* and a short discourse. The students get refreshed by such courses, their batteries gets charged. This should be encouraged. It will be helpful. ❧

Our residence is in the midst of a crowded city which makes it difficult to meditate. Is there any way to keep such outside disturbances out of our meditation?

[Laughs.] As I said, either you change your residence—run away from the noise of the city—or you become so powerful that you can stop all noises around you. Neither is possible. You have to live in society in the same circumstances where you have been living. You have to strengthen yourself and learn how to ignore all these disturbances. In the same way that a lotus living in water is not affected by the water, you can ignore all these disturbances. For example, right now we are talking and a bird is chirping outside. This bird does not disturb us—we are busy with our discussion. In the same way, we may be busy with our meditation. Let any noise be there, we continue our meditation. One has to train oneself. One has to live in the world full of disturbances, and in spite of this maintain peace and harmony within. ❧

Please explain the significance of Dhamma service in the courses. What is the role of the Dhamma servers—their relationship amongst themselves, and with trustees and assistant teachers? And what training and facilities do they require?

Dhamma service is a very important part of the practice of Dhamma. When you come to a course of ten days and practise Vipassana, you are purifying your mind. You are strengthening your mind, so that you can apply the practice in your daily life. If you can't apply Dhamma in daily life, coming to a course becomes another rite, ritual or religious ceremony, which will be ineffective.

Having learned Vipassana at a centre, you go out in the world where things are so unpleasant, and everything goes totally against your wishes or your dreams. You are shaken and can't face this. It is so difficult. So one gets a very good opportunity coming to give Dhamma service at a ten-day course—the atmosphere is so congenial and now you can apply your Dhamma.

When you serve for ten days, you apply what you have learned in your ten-day course. You deal with the same things that you have to deal with outside: how to deal with people—with the students, with the teacher, with the other Dhamma servers, with the trustees. What is your behaviour in such situations? You make mistakes, and you learn from them. Again you make a mistake, and again you rectify it. This is how you learn. This is the practical aspect of applying Dhamma in life.

Another important thing is that while you are giving service to Dhamma, Dhamma service, this is a part of *dāna—dhammadāna. Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*—The *dāna* of Dhamma excels all other *dāna*. You are giving the *dāna* of Dhamma. The teacher is teaching, this is good. Somebody has given a donation, this also is good. But then there must be people to serve at that time. So you are a part of this, you are serving. This is your donation.

The donation of your service, I would say, is much more valuable than the donation of your money. It is the intention which is most important. The Buddha said, *Cetanā ahaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*—Volition, O monks, I call *kamma*. When you give *dāna,* your intention is,

"With my money, so many people will benefit. I can give money to quench the thirst of someone, or give food or medicine to someone. These are very good deeds. But here I see, when I give money, so many people come out of their misery, their impurities. My money is used in a very wholesome way." So this kind of volition in the mind goes to the credit of your *kamma*.

But when you are here for ten days, every moment you are giving service, and you are giving service with the volition, "May more and more people benefit." This volition continues for ten days, so the proportion of time you spend in generating this volition is much greater than when you gave the *dāna* of money. I am not saying, "Don't give *dāna* of money." Otherwise how will courses run? But between the two, the donation of service, Dhamma service, is much more beneficial.

I have found something else from my own experience, and from the experience of many students also: For a number of years I was a Dhamma server assisting my teacher; I would just translate his words. On his instruction, I would go to the students and discuss their problem—such kinds of jobs. I found that this was so helpful to me. After sitting a course of ten days, and then giving service to the students for ten days, my meditation became very strong. And I have heard this as well from many students. They keep saying, "I have given service for ten days at a Vipassana course, and my meditation has become very strong, my Dhamma has become very strong." This is natural, it happens like this.

I would say that every student should make it a point to spare some time for serving people in Dhamma. To take course after course while doing nothing for Dhamma service is not a healthy way of developing in Dhamma. Take courses, but also spare time for serving in Dhamma. This is very important.

The relationship amongst servers, with the teachers, with the trustees—all this has to be learned here "in the field." It is fieldwork! Of course proper guidance should be given to the Dhamma server.

Quite often a student has taken just one course, and then out of enthusiasm comes to give service on the next course. One is not very mature so he or she starts behaving in a wrong way—like a policeman, shouting at the students.

This is harmful for him because he is generating such a wrong volition, harmful to the students, and harmful to the entire atmosphere. The students will get discouraged, they won't know that this person has taken only one course. They will think, "Because he is giving service, he must be a very responsible person in the organization, and look how he is behaving! What sort of meditation is this, then? If it could not help improve even their own servers, how can it help me to improve?"

This kind of behaviour will discourage people from practising Vipassana. Therefore, proper guidance must be given, if possible, before people join a course to serve others in Dhamma. You can have some sort of manual. Something was made I think, some time back. Keep reviewing it. Every Dhamma server should be required to read it, and you should discuss with them to make sure they have understood it properly.

Now proper facilities: Yes, this is another very important issue. I have seen in many centres

that due to the increasing number of students, the facilities are limited, so the worst sufferer is the Dhamma server. Frequently he has to move his baggage and his bedding from room to room, or from a building to a tent outside. Poor chap, he has no proper place to live. How can we expect someone to serve properly when there are no proper facilities? I would say that every centre should make it a point to have proper, regular facilities for the servers, females as well as males—separately. This is very important. ❧

What contribution can we make in the spread of Dhamma?

The best contribution is to help yourself. Get established in Dhamma, and see that people start appreciating Dhamma by seeing your way of life, "Look, before going to Dhamma, this person was one way, and now what a big change has come! A change for the better has come!" If they find that there is no change in this person, or he or she has become worse and started generating ego now, thinking, "I am a grand Vipassana meditator. I am a very purified person!"—then they will run away from Dhamma. In trying to spread Dhamma, no purpose will be served.

Each individual is a representative of Dhamma, so each individual has to be very careful. If one is a Vipassana meditator, or somebody in the Vipassana organization with more responsibility, then one is in the limelight now. People will look at you, at your behaviour, your way of life, your way of dealing with things. And if they find defects in you, this will make people run away from Dhamma. To encourage people, the best thing is to become an ideal person yourself. People will get encouragement from this.

Giving information to people that there is something like this going on, that there is a technique which can help us to come out of our misery—this information is very important. In the West you have started to have public talks, showing videotapes—a few people gather, and there are people to answer questions. In this way also, people should hear about Dhamma. A large number of people, the vast majority, do not even know that there is something like this going on. This information should be offered in a very humble way. This will help. ❧

I want to wind up my business activities which are very spread out, but I am finding it very difficult. I am told my time is not opportune, that I will have to wait. Do all the stars and other planets influence me in this?

[Laughs.] The stars are so far away! Why get frightened by these stars? They are not going to harm you in any way. You harm yourself, actually. But why are you thinking of running away from the responsibility of your business? This is not the proper thing. The time has not arrived for most of the students to come out of their householder's life and livelihood. At this stage, I would say, we want good householders—good, ideal householders—living in society, taking care of all their responsibilities, yet living a very good life.

When society starts improving in this way, and more and more Vipassana people fulfil their responsibilities in a proper way, then out of this good society, people will come out, and leave

the householder's life. To leave the house for one's own liberation, and to also help others, is an ideal thing; we are not against this. But at the same time, a good society must be created. A larger number of ideal householders should be created. So running away at this stage is no solution, escape is no solution. Be in society, and yet be aloof; do not become attached. ❧

No doubt through Vipassana one observes and experiences physical reactions at the body level. How does this technique help to purify the mind itself, which is the main objective?

You see, as you learn in Vipassana courses, at a very deep level, the mind keeps experiencing the sensations on the body; day and night. And it has become a prisoner of its own habit pattern—when it experiences these sensations, it keeps reacting to them. If the sensations are perceived to be pleasant, the mind will react with craving. If the sensations are perceived as unpleasant, it will react with aversion. So this habit of craving and aversion keeps multiplying every moment, because at a deep level this is what you are continuously doing.

At the surface level, you may try to come out of this habit of reaction, and you may seem to come out of it. But at the deep level, the habit pattern remains. The purpose of observing sensations at this deep level is to change the habit pattern of the mind at the root level. When we change things at the root level, the entire mind will automatically get changed. So this is how we make use of this technique to purify the mind by observing the sensations. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA THALI, INDIA
JANUARY 5, 1993
CLOSING ADDRESS

THE FAMILY OF DHAMMA

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

The report that I just heard was quite positive. The Dhamma family is growing and this is a good sign. But at the same time it must grow in a proper way. The whole Vipassana family should be united without any disharmony.

Great responsibility rests on those who serve Dhamma. Serving starts at the stage when someone joins a camp as a Dhamma server in order to develop one's own *pāramīs*, one's own meditation, by serving people. Having learned the technique, now one learns how to apply it in life in a very congenial atmosphere. When you are in the world, you may find the atmosphere is not very good and you are not very successful in applying Dhamma. Here the atmosphere is wonderful; all around there are Dhamma vibrations. While you are serving the students, quite possibly one of them might generate negativity and speak harshly to you or may not accept the discipline. If you become irritated and generate negativity, you are not working properly. You should immediately realize, "Well look, I am here to serve people, to eradicate my negativity, not to work like a policeman or a policewoman."

When you meditate, you are not supposed to react to sensations, yet at times you find that when an unpleasant sensation arises, the part of the mind which has the habit of reacting starts doing so. But how quickly do you realize, "Oh no, I have started reacting with aversion"? When you do, you come back to equanimity. A pleasant sensation arises, and you react with craving. You reacted because you are not perfect. But then how quickly do you realize, "Well look, I have reacted. Oh, no. I must come back to observing with equanimity. I must come out of this craving."

Similarly, when you are serving people and you have reacted wrongly, how quickly do you realize, "Oh, no, I am here to serve people, and I have made a mistake"? Come back. Always serve with love and compassion. Every action that you take, every suggestion that you give to a meditator must be with a very calm, quiet, harmonious mind, full of love and compassion.

Serving on a course is a training ground for you. You are successful here, and then you can apply what you have learned in the outside world.

Along with Dhamma servers there are some who manage the courses or the centres. This is a big responsibility for managers. A manager must have very congenial relations with the Dhamma servers and the meditators. Management should be full of love and compassion.

Then you have junior assistant teachers. Their work is very important. Unfortunately the present generation has a big burden of sectarianism, of communalism. All these struggles, strife and killing are going on because people have forgotten Dhamma and regard only their own sect as important. Everyone tries to build up one's own sect without wanting to build up Dhamma in oneself.

We should not pass this inheritance to the coming generation; they should be saved from the madness of sectarianism. If Dhamma is given to them at a young age—pure Dhamma, free from sectarianism, universal Dhamma—they will understand, "I am a human being and whether I call myself a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian or a Jain, it doesn't matter." One is only a human being when one lives the life of Dhamma. Otherwise a person has lost his or her humanity. So from a young age children must understand how to live in Dhamma as good human beings.

The technique to develop Dhamma within oneself is given to them. *Sīla, samādhi* and *paññā* are universal: This must be understood at a very young age so that children get this training in pure Dhamma. If they are given this with love and compassion, they will accept it. The information I get from these children's courses is very encouraging, because benefits are coming. More children's courses are essential. That is why I want more junior assistant teachers to take up this job.

And then there are the assistant teachers. It is a serious responsibility for the assistant teachers who have to give these ten-day courses. People will come to these courses if the assistant teacher is working properly, with the volition to serve people, not just developing one's ego. Do not think, "Now I am an assistant teacher, I sit on the Dhamma seat, and everybody bows down to me three times. Wonderful!" One has to come out of that ego. You are here to serve. When students are bowing down, they are bowing down to Dhamma, not to you. This point should be very clear to everyone.

And then you have senior assistant teachers. Now their job is not only to give ten-day courses, but also serious courses. At the same time they give guidance and training to the assistant teachers and the junior assistant teachers who have been appointed.

And then we have what we call *upācāriya*. We called them co-ordinators before, but I would like to call them *upācāriya*. In English that is deputy teacher. Their job is to take the same responsibility and to work in the same way that the Teacher is working.

Now the relationship between all these is very important. This is the inner core of the Vipassana family, from the Dhamma servers to the deputy teacher. If you quarrel, where is Dhamma? You are representatives of Dhamma. People examine Dhamma through you. They watch whether you live a proper life, and if so, they decide Dhamma is good. If you are not living a proper life, they see it as all a sham. You will harm people by turning them away from the path of Dhamma. You have to be very careful. You have a big responsibility when you sit on the Dhamma seat.

If someone gets a higher post, understand, "Now I have an opportunity to serve in this

way. Each one has to serve, that is all." Understand that there is no power. It is not like a hierarchy or bureaucracy where the senior has the power to dismiss the junior, or do that type of thing, which is dangerous.

If a senior finds that there is some defect in a junior, work with compassion and love, thinking, "I must take out whatever is wrong in this person. I must not drive this person away." So with all the love try to rectify, to correct that junior. And juniors must always have respect for the seniors. This is the tradition from the time of Buddha.

There was an incident at the time of Lord Buddha: When he returned to his homeland after his enlightenment, the people there might have had some sort of negativity towards him, wondering why he had run away from his responsibilities. But they found that he was such a wonderful person, and that what he had attained was good for the whole world, so naturally they were attracted to him.

A few princes decided that they should follow him and become monks, serve themselves and then serve others. When they reached the Buddha they gave all their ornaments and valuable clothes to a servant, a barber by the name of Upāli, saying, "We are going to become monks. You have these." He thought, "These people who have lived such a luxurious life are leaving all this. What would I do with it all? Why don't I also become a monk?"

The princes were from a very high caste. In this country unfortunately casteism was, and still is, the biggest malady, so the princes decided that the barber should be ordained first. The procedure was that someone who is ordained first is senior to the person ordained next. And a junior will always pay respect to a senior. The princes said to each other, "Every time we bow down to this barber we will be dissolving our ego. If he pays respect to us, then our ego will not get dissolved." What a wonderful way of thinking!

Similarly, anybody who is appointed earlier to these responsibilities will be seen as senior and respected by someone who is appointed later. Understand that he or she represents Dhamma, I bow down to Dhamma, and I have to respect them. Only then will the whole atmosphere be very congenial. The seniors must always have love and compassion for the juniors.

At the time of the Buddha, of course there were some who didn't work properly, but the vast majority of his followers, the monks, etc., were renowned for this. *Samaggā*, "Look how they live united. Wonderful!" They were the followers of Buddha, the sons and daughters of Buddha.

You are all sons and daughters of Buddha because you were given a new life with the words of Buddha. How did those sons and daughters of Buddha live? *Samaggā*—united, free from quarrelling, with happiness inside. *Sammodamānā*—all the time there is compassion, love, happiness, cordiality. That is the quality of a Buddha *putra* or a Buddha *putri*, of a son or daughter of the Buddha. *Avivadamānā*—they don't quarrel. If they quarrel then they are not fit sons and fit daughters.

And then *khīrodakībhūtā*. *Khīra* means milk, *odaka* means water: They live like water and milk joined together, you can't separate them. And

they look at each other with love in their eyes, not anger, not with red eyes. Their eyes are full of honey—*piyacakkhū*, so much love. This is their way of life. That ideal must be continued. This is the code of the family: *khīrodakībhūtā*. The whole family must live like brothers and sisters. Be an example, be ideal. People look at you, so it is very important that your relations with each other are very cordial. People should be encouraged, inspired, seeing you. You should attract people towards Dhamma, who until now, have had no attraction to it. And you must see that those people who have already been attracted towards Dhamma are attracted more strongly.

It is a very big responsibility. This is the time when the expansion is starting. Now it will be very rapid, there is no doubt. We are very fortunate that we have an opportunity to serve in such a good atmosphere. This is a time when there is so much unhappiness, Dhamma has to arise. It has started arising. It will grow in spite of us, whether we are there or not. Now we have an opportunity to serve and to develop our own *pāramīs*.

Make use of the opportunity for your own good and for the good of others; for your own liberation and happiness, and for the liberation and happiness of others. May Dhamma grow. May the people of the world come out of their miseries. May there be peace, harmony and happiness.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 21, 1994
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: Goenkaji, every time assistant teachers enter and leave the meditation hall, Dhamma servers bow down. The students are watching this, and when they offer Dhamma service they do the same thing. It has become almost a ritual. Could you please advise on this?

Goenkaji: In pure Dhamma no ritual at all should be allowed. Dhamma and ritual cannot co-exist. I find nothing wrong in somebody's paying respect to an assistant teacher, provided this person is paying respect to Dhamma. An assistant teacher or whoever sits on the Dhamma seat—assistant or senior assistant or deputy or teacher, anybody—is representing the Buddha, the teachings of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the entire lineage of the teachers of Vipassana. He or she lives a life of Dhamma and is serving people in Dhamma. One develops a feeling of devotion, of gratitude towards this person. Bowing down is a meritorious deed. Actually one is bowing down to Dhamma, paying respect to Dhamma.

But when this becomes merely a formal rite or ritual, it goes totally against Dhamma. If someone bows out of respect and others feel, "If I do not bow then people will consider me a very discourteous person, so I must also bow," again, there is no Dhamma. To act with Dhamma is always to have a pure volition in the mind. Otherwise it is just a mechanical exercise: You bow down and give good exercise to your back! If these back exercises are to be done, better do them in your own room.

If somebody does not bow because at that particular moment he or she has not developed the volition of devotion towards Dhamma, I feel happy, "Very good." Bowing must be with this volition of paying respect to Dhamma, not to the individual.

Even the Buddha did not like people paying respect to him. He said, "You may be with me all the time, catching one corner of my robe, yet you are far away from me. But if you are practising Dhamma with purity of mind, though you may be thousands of miles away, you are near me."

Yo dhammaṃ passati so maṃ passati, yo maṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati. One who is observing Dhamma—that means observing Dhamma inside—is observing me, is seeing me. If one is not observing Dhamma, then bowing down is merely a mad exercise. ❧

The Venerable Webu Sayadaw, in the booklet entitled *The Essential Practice*, says *ānāpānasati* is the shortcut to *nibbāna*. How is this so if he is observing sensations only in one small spot? And yet you advocate the need to observe the full realm of *vedanā*. Could you explain this, please?

A very good question. There is a lot of misunderstanding by people who do not understand how this tradition was maintained in the neighbouring country [Burma]. The Venerable Webu Sayadaw was a product of a particular tradi-

tion of this technique maintained in that country, and that tradition says that a student must start with Anapana. There are many objects with which you can start to develop your *samādhi*. When you develop *samādhi* with Anapana, this is the shortcut to *nibbāna*—as he very rightly said.

His teaching—because I met him a number of times and I was in close proximity with him—his way of teaching was as follows: Keep observing this area, keep observing the respiration. A time will come when the sensation will become very clear. And a time will come when automatically this sensation will start spreading to the whole body. The sensation has to spread in the whole body. Unless it spreads to the whole body, you can't reach the *nibbānic* stage, because you can't experience *bhaṅga*. *Bhaṅga* is not just experiencing sensation in a small part of the body: The entire *nāma* and *rūpa* must get totally dissolved. This is *bhaṅga*. The Venerable Webu Sayadaw didn't instruct anybody by saying, "You will reach *nibbāna* without *bhaṅga*." Such a view is a wrong understanding of his teaching. ❧

All of us want to spread the Dhamma to relieve misery around the world. None of us, however, wants to create the impression of pushing Vipassana on others, as if we want to expand the size of our sect. Could you give some guidelines about spreading the word of this wonderful technique without giving others reason to label Vipassana as a cult?

If you are pushing Vipassana on others, you are pushing people *away* from Dhamma. How can anyone push this wonderful Dhamma on others? Actually the tradition—a healthy tradition—is that the Dhamma is not given to anyone unless the person very humbly requests it. How can you push it on others? If somebody requests, then you give it. Anybody who is trying to push Dhamma on others is certainly spreading cultism, certainly spreading sectarianism.

Dhamma is Dhamma, it has to be given with all the compassion and love. And people should accept it willingly, with all respect. Only then is it Dhamma, otherwise it is not. ❧

Could you please explain the role of the assistant teachers and students in ensuring that Vipassana continues to benefit mankind.

You mean the relationship between the assistant teacher and the students? Assistant teachers are made assistant teachers in order to learn how to teach Dhamma in a proper way. It is a training period for them. As one develops the perfect way of giving Dhamma, one takes further responsibility, becoming a senior assistant teacher. If in that role one keeps working properly, one gets still more responsibility, becoming a deputy teacher. Working perfectly in that, one becomes a teacher. So it is all a training.

Somebody sitting on the Dhamma seat as an assistant teacher may start developing a feeling of ego, "See, I am now far superior to all these meditators who have come here, that is why I am sitting on the Dhamma seat." Or someone who moves from assistant teacher to senior assistant teacher may start feeling, "Now I am far superior to these assistant teachers." Or someone who becomes a deputy teacher feels, "Look, I am far superior." Or somebody

who becomes a teacher may feel, "Oh, I am the uppermost! Everybody must obey whatever I say."

If this madness develops, the person is not fit to teach Dhamma. The whole training is given for this purpose. As soon as one becomes an assistant teacher, one's job is to learn how to give Dhamma in a very humble way.

One must think, "I am a representative of Buddha, of Dhamma, of the entire chain of the Teachers of Dhamma. I am a representative of my own Teacher. Anything I do which gives a bad name to the whole tradition or to Dhamma is a very anti-meritorious deed. I am here to develop my own *pāramīs*, to pay back my debt of gratitude to the Buddha himself, to the whole lineage of Teachers, and to my own Teacher, because I got this wonderful Dhamma from them. For this reason, I am serving." If a teacher has this feeling, every action of his will be a wonderful action. One's service will be helpful.

The students also give respect to him, but the moment he starts imposing himself as an authority, this person is not fit, although he was made a teacher. The training, which is going on now, is all trial and error; people are being trained how to serve in Dhamma.

As Sayagyi U Ba Khin used to say, "Someone whom I designate as fit to teach may fail, totally fail." It all depends what *pāramīs* this person has. If one has good *pāramīs* from the past, this person will automatically become successful in teaching, and will advance from assistant teacher to teacher, because he will have those qualities.

He or she will think, "I am thankful to the people who come to learn Dhamma. So many people have come to learn Dhamma from me. Now I can get the *pāramī* of *dāna*, and the *dāna pāramī* of giving Dhamma is the highest *dāna pāramī*. How could I develop that *pāramī* unless these people came? I cannot go into the jungle and declare, 'I will teach everybody here.' I am developing my *dāna pāramī* because these people who come are giving me the opportunity. I am grateful to them.

"And the lineage—the Teachers, right from the Buddha—were teaching with all love and compassion! I am still learning, but this should be my ideal, this should be my aim. This is how I have to work."

Anybody who is given a higher duty should keep thinking, "From the very beginning, my job is to be a Dhamma servant. Whether a Dhamma server or an assistant teacher, I am giving Dhamma service. Now I am getting the opportunity to do more Dhamma service."

There is no authority in Dhamma. There is only very humble service. This is the only way to have rapport with the students. Every teacher—assistant or senior or deputy or full teacher—has to understand what will happen if you impose your will on the students.

Suppose we say, "From tomorrow onwards, this person is an assistant teacher and you have to accept his orders, to fulfil whatever he desires…. Now he is a senior, so all the assistants must listen to his words. Whatever he says is correct and you must bow down and accept it…. Now he is a deputy, so everybody else must listen to him." If that is the approach, how long will this imposition last? Even in my lifetime, people will start disrespecting this person. After that, this person will have no place in the whole system of teaching Dhamma.

One has to develop one's service in such a way that every student starts generating love towards you. If this is not generated, there is merely imposed authority. This is not a dictatorship, it is service. So serve in such a way that you generate love and respect in the minds of the students. This is how your service will give good results. If you start imposing your authority, your power, you can never be a successful teacher.

For their part, the students should keep understanding, "Here is a person who has been appointed. I have great respect for my Teacher, for the line of the Teachers. I have great respect for Buddha. And here is a person—rightly or wrongly—whom my Teacher has decided is capable to give service. Now he or she represents Dhamma by sitting on the Dhamma seat."

The student will always try to generate respect for the assistant teacher. But this respect must be strengthened by the action of the teacher, by his or her behaviour.

If the teacher does not have the quality of humbleness, of love and compassion, this person can never be a successful teacher. Even if he is asked to sit on the Dhamma seat, it won't work.

This kind of relationship between the teacher and the students is essential. ❧

Very frequently you say that wealth alone cannot give peace and tranquillity. What should people who have neither wealth nor happiness do?

Yes, it is quite correct that wealth alone cannot give peace and harmony. But at the same time, wealth has a very important part to play in life. A householder should not remain a beggar, seeking help from others. He must have the ability to earn his own livelihood, as everyone should do.

Somebody who had not eaten for two days came to the Buddha, and people said, "Please, sir, give him Dhamma. He will get peace. He is a very restless person."

Buddha replied, "First give him food, then he can come to me, and I will give Dhamma." With an empty stomach, one cannot teach Dhamma or take Dhamma. Money has a very important role to play, but this alone cannot give peace and harmony.

In a Western, so-called developed country—materially they are developed, but I don't know whether they are really developed or not—somebody goes to the government to apply for welfare because he doesn't have a job. This jobless person travels to the government office in his own car! He drives in a car to claim his dole! Now that is a very wealthy country. Yet I am told every third or fourth person takes tranquillizers or sleeping pills to sleep. Tons of tranquillizers and sleeping pills are sold in this country every day.

There is wealth, but where is peace? I want every so-called underdeveloped country to become developed not only materially, but with the base of Dhamma. There should be material affluence in each country, but along with this there must be peace.

At night when you go to bed, as soon as your head touches the pillow, you must start snoring, you must get a sound sleep. All these factories which manufacture sleeping pills should close! That will happen only when there is Dhamma. Along with Dhamma, if the material requirements are fulfilled by wealth, you have the ideal. This is what is needed. ❧

If all the members of a family are regular, good Vipassana meditators, and if they have a stream of visitors, is this a good sign that they are attracting visitors to the house?

How do you react to it? If you feel, "Because of Vipassana so many people are coming to my house. Then this Vipassana is not good for me. I can't have so many guests in my house," then you are not practising Vipassana.

Your mind should be full of joy, "So many guests are coming to my house. I now have an opportunity to serve them, like members of my family. I am a very fortunate person, with so many people coming to my house." And while you are serving them, while you are seeing to their comforts, you do it all with *mettā*, with Vipassana. This is how the ideal householder should behave. ❧

In his daily life, does a Vipassana meditator not require any other exercises or yoga to maintain his physical health?

Exercise is very essential. You are practising Vipassana as a mental exercise to keep the mind strong and healthy. Similarly, you must have some physical exercises, whether yoga or any other exercise, to keep the body healthy and strong. It is essential, it should be done. ❧

Is it necessary for part-time Dhamma servers to observe the five precepts?

Part-time or full-time, one has started giving Dhamma service. That in itself shows that you have now chosen the path of Dhamma and you want to spread Dhamma. If you don't apply Dhamma in your own life, how can you be a tool to spread Dhamma to others?

Moreover, when you choose to be a Dhamma servant, people start looking at your behaviour, your way of life. They will examine Dhamma by your behaviour. If your behaviour is not good, how will people come to Dhamma?

So not only for the spread of Dhamma, but also for your own interest, you must practise *pañcasīla*, the five precepts. ❧

Many meditators desire to go on a Dhamma pilgrimage with you. In the past it was organized from here. Is it possible to organize a similar one again?

I too would like to go with my Dhamma family for this Dhamma journey. But it is not a rite or a ritual.

The last such journey was a moving Vipassana course. All those who started the journey took Anapana. And then even in the train, there was just meditation going on. Arrangements were made for the instructions to be broadcast over the loudspeaker. There were two passenger coaches, and both received the same instructions. The trip went on like a Vipassana course. At some place Vipassana was given. And then whenever we reached a destination, we proceeded as in a regular course. We would go to a certain important place—Buddha's birthplace or where he became enlightened—and we would meditate there.

This was a very healthy way of going on pilgrimage. But that was a time when I had about fifty students with me. Now the family is growing. Now when the eldest of the family starts

on the journey, all the children will say, "We also want to go!" How can we make arrangements for so many people for this course-in-motion? Yet, I would very much like to take this kind of journey. But let us see what the possibilities are, what facilities can be arranged. ❧

I am eighty-one years of age and I long to give Dhamma service at the centre. But I find that the management does not have a *mettā* attitude towards me. Old people should also get an opportunity to serve.

If the management does not have *mettā*, it is not a healthy management. If the management feels that a certain person is not needed because there are already a sufficient number of Dhamma servers, there is no meaning in increasing the numbers. Then one has to be refused, but that refusal must be with the base of *mettā*. Nobody should complain, "The management had no *mettā* for me." There should be *mettā*, but refusals are unavoidable. There are many reasons for refusal, and only the management or the teacher who is giving the course can make the decision.

It's quite possible that someone has a good volition to serve, but physically is not strong enough. Or perhaps sometimes even mentally one is not sufficiently stable to serve. So this decision must be made only by the management or the assistant teacher. If one is told very politely, "We don't need your service at this moment," one has to accept this. Smilingly, one has to accept it. ❧

If a Vipassana meditator teaches yoga as a livelihood should he give up teaching the *āsanas, gāyatri* and *oṃkāra* mantras, or should he continue teaching them?

It is one's own decision. It takes time for a student to understand Vipassana at the depth. We are neither against *gāyatri* nor against *om*. Any word that is recited again and again generates a particular type of vibration. But this is a created vibration, an artificial vibration. Vipassana wants us to deal with the natural vibration—*yathā-bhūta*, as it is. As it is—what is happening in my body? As it is—what is happening in my mind? This has to be observed. With mantras we are creating a veneer of an artificial vibration. This will cause difficulty.

We keep explaining this to the students. If a student still feels, "This other thing is very good for me," let them carry on. We cannot impose the view that they must practise only in this way.

But regarding those who have started teaching—whether junior teacher or assistant teacher or senior assistant teacher or deputy teacher—if they start telling people, "If you want to add this, nothing wrong," this will be harmful. Suppose a student becomes very agitated, and without giving a solution in the Vipassana way, the assistant teacher advises, "Recite this mantra. Go and sit somewhere and recite this mantra for some time." By reciting this mantra, the student will certainly calm down. And the teacher may feel, "Wonderful, this mantra has worked well. Let me give this mantra to everybody who comes." Then the technique will get lost and people won't get the benefit of Vipassana. The teachers have to be very careful not to mix anything with Vipassana.

As for the students, we have to leave them to their own discretion. After all, initially Dhamma starts when somebody goes to kindergarten, with all these rites, rituals and recitations. This is how one starts. But as one progresses, all these will be left behind naturally. As one really progresses in Vipassana, all these mantras and such will fall away naturally; one won't have to make any effort to make them go away. But at this stage, if we impose something, it won't be proper.

So you should be careful. If you are a teacher, you must not give such guidance to people. And if you are a student, understand that this mixing will be harmful for you; you must come out of it. But if you feel, "No, this is helpful to me," then continue for some time. Later on you will understand. Nothing should be imposed. ❧

As expressed in your discourses, the effectiveness of Vipassana meditation will last around five hundred years in this country. Then it will lose its effectiveness because it will get polluted through mixture with other techniques. Is this comment of yours based on the past history of the country or is it due to some weakness in the technique itself that it will start losing its effectiveness around five hundred years from now?

The technique is very strong. It does not become weak—that is out of the question. We weaken it because we are not strong. If we remain strong—that means the public remains strong, the meditators remain strong—certainly it will be effective for more than five hundred years. But from the experience of the past, we say that it should be available for at least five hundred years. If you start polluting it even now, within this generation, there is a danger that it won't be there to serve people for even five hundred years.

The technique was lost partly because it began to be mixed with other things, and also because the teachers of Dhamma lost their pure lifestyle. Somebody sitting on a high Dhamma seat started expecting, "Everybody must pay respect to me. Everybody must give some donation. I am a selected person, a special person." Because of this kind of feeling their life in Dhamma started degenerating. And when people have no respect for such a teacher, how can they have respect for the teaching, however good it may be?

These were the two reasons why the technique lost its efficacy after five hundred years. I would very much like the Dhamma to be there serving people for not only five hundred years, but for many hundreds of years. But I keep saying, "For at least five hundred years allow it to remain pure, and let the teachers also remain pure." ❧

Living in society, a serious meditator has to participate in the rites, rituals or ceremonies of marriages, funerals and other such activities. In such situations what should the meditator do?

Participate, there is nothing wrong in that. You have to live with your family members, you have to live in society. If you start being antagonistic, this is not Dhamma. Give *mettā*. Keep giving *mettā* to them. And if you have to participate in these kinds of rites and rituals, deep inside keep experiencing the *anicca* that is going

on while you are performing that rite and ritual. If you do that, there is nothing wrong.

When the time comes, the family members will also come to the stage where they understand that these rites and rituals are meaningless, that actually Dhamma is important. They will also become Dhamma people and start practising *anicca*. But don't impose your ideas, don't create any kind of friction.

In all the previous lives of the *Bodhisatta*, he practised *vohāra kusala*, that is, finding a proper course of action in difficult situations. You have to live in society as a householder, so you have to find out appropriate means that do not create any kind of antagonism with the members of the family or members of the society. You have to live very peacefully and harmoniously, and yet keep progressing in Dhamma. ❧

Practising Vipassana meditation for long years, many have been appointed as assistant teachers and senior assistant teachers. In spite of this, in quite a few of them there is no equanimity and humbleness in their behaviour or in their speech. In fact their ego has multiplied because of their knowledge and practice. What is the reason for this? Where is the mistake and how can it be rectified?

A person who has multiplied his or her ego has no knowledge of Dhamma, is not practising Vipassana. If one is practising Vipassana, one has the wisdom of Vipassana, one understands Vipassana, then the ego has to get deflated, it has to get dissolved. These two—the practice of Dhamma and ego—cannot go together.

If one is progressing in Dhamma, this means one is progressing in the understanding of *anicca*. The understanding of *anicca* will take one to the understanding of *dukkha*, and then to the understanding of *anattā*. More and more as one practises, the experience and the understanding of *anattā* becomes stronger. No *attā*, no ego. *Anattā*—egolessness. This is the yardstick to measure whether one is really progressing on the path of Dhamma or not—for a teacher or a student—but a teacher has more responsibility because he is sitting on the Dhamma seat.

At times it is quite possible that a student may have developed some negativity towards the teacher due to another reason. Then one starts seeing with the coloured glasses of negativity and finding fault with the teacher.

Everyone who sits on the Dhamma seat must always remain prepared: There will be people who will admire you, and those who will condemn you. Smilingly accept both. Keep your equanimity. Whenever admiration comes, understand, "Oh, they are admiring Dhamma. I am the same as before, but Dhamma has entered into me, and they are admiring Dhamma." And if somebody condemns you, first examine yourself, "Am I committing this mistake for which I am being condemned?" If the mistake is there, remove it. This is your job. In your own interest, remove it.

If you find that the mistake is not there, if you have examined yourself properly and still somebody is abusing you, denouncing you, then smile, give *mettā* to this person. Don't have any kind of reaction of aversion. This is how one keeps growing on the path of Dhamma.

Teacher or student—whoever one may be—if you are to progress on the path of Dhamma, one important yardstick is, "Is my ego increasing or decreasing? If the ego is decreasing, I am on the right path. If it is increasing, I am not on the right path." ❧

Vipassana meditation is a double-edged sword. If not used properly, one can harm oneself. The Vipassana meditator sometimes begins to roll in the emotions of aversion, hatred, anger, craving. And those who come in contact with such a person are surprised that Vipassana is having a reverse effect. Where is the mistake? Kindly clarify how to get out of this state and remain alert.

Vipassana is not a double-edged sword, but the concentration of mind, the *samādhi*, is a double-edged sword. *Samādhi* can be *micchā-samādhi* or *sammā-samādhi*.

When practising, you go deeper, deeper to the stage where you can feel the deeper realities. Your mind gets sharper and sharper. With this sharp mind, if you generate *mettā* it will be so powerful. The entire atmosphere will get charged with the electricity of *mettā* because you are working at the depth of the mind and this sword has become now very sharp. It is cutting all the impurities of the atmosphere, and making it very pure and peaceful. With the same depth and the same sharpness of the mind, if you generate aversion, the entire atmosphere will be agitated by this aversion that you have generated.

It is quite possible that while meditating, or even after meditation during one's day-to-day life, a feeling of aversion arises. Because of the old habit pattern of mind, aversion has arisen. Now the best thing for the meditator is to accept, "At the present moment, my mind is full of aversion—*Sadosaṃ vā cittaṃ 'sadosaṃ cittaṃ' ti pajānāti.* The mind which has now manifested itself is full of *dosa*, aversion. Just accept it, do nothing. Don't try to push it out.

But at the same time start observing the sensations. Because whatever has come on the mind—*sabbe dhammā vedanā samosaraṇā*—is bound to manifest as a sensation on the body. The sensation on the body at this particular moment is related to the impurity that has arisen in the mind. Just accept this fact, "My mind at this moment is full of aversion. And see, these are the sensations, and I have been practising so long, so I know that they are impermanent. They come, they go away. Yes, they are *anicca*, *anicca*. So this aversion is also *anicca*, *anicca*. Let me see how long it lasts." Just keep observing it, don't try to push it out.

Then you are like the awakened owner of a house. The thief who has entered the house will run away the moment he knows that the owner of the house is awakened. Now you are awakened: "See, the thief has come. Aversion has come." This aversion has come and it will go away. This is how to practise Vipassana properly.

If one is not practising Vipassana, but only training the mind to become sharp, this is not a healthy sign. Then your practice may go towards *micchā-samādhi*, not towards *sammā-samādhi*. ❧

Of the four levels of liberation—*sotāpanna, sakadāgāmī, anāgāmī,* and *arahant*—kindly tell us what stage you are in.

No stage! If you don't want to walk with me, I cannot force you. Understand, the path of spirituality is a progressive development. I started a few years earlier, so I can say that I am a few steps ahead of you and I can teach you, "Come, this is how I am progressing. This is how I benefited from the path. You also come along. Keep trying."

The main thing is, if you find that there is something good in this person, in his teaching, then you should follow him. Otherwise, if you find that he is not an *arahant*, and feel, "I won't follow this person," it is your decision. I don't mind. ❧

One last question, Guruji. Please enlighten us again on the duties and responsibilities of assistant teachers, trustees, and Dhamma servers.

There are a lot of duties and responsibilities, but no power, no authority. One should never start thinking, "Because I am a Dhamma server now, I have authority to govern all these students. I am like a policeman or policewoman; I will see to it that everyone acts according to the rules written in the Code of Discipline." With this kind of feeling one is not fit to serve.

Nor should one think, "I have become a trustee. I am not an ordinary member of this organization any longer. I have the authority to make decisions, whether they are good or bad." This person is not fit to be a trustee.

Nor should someone who has become an assistant teacher or a senior assistant teacher or a deputy teacher feel, "Now I am the authority! I can condemn anybody. If I have bad relations with a certain person, I can see that this person is removed." Then what sort of teacher are you? A fatherly feeling, a motherly feeling must develop, "I have been given this responsibility in order to develop the quality of a mother or a father looking after their own children. If one child has a defect, then my *mettā*, my compassion for that child is greater." Only responsibility and service. No authority.

Anybody who wants to progress on the path of Dhamma should understand that there is no authority, power or prestige at all. If one is expecting to gain these, it is better for this person to step down and work as an ordinary meditator. One should realize that the whole path is a path of selfless service, with no expectation of anything in return.

I keep saying: *Ṣīśa utāre bhuīṅ dhare cale hamāre sātha*. Cut off your head—cut off your ego—then come with me. If you do this, yes you are fit to come with me. Otherwise you can't accompany me, you will drop out.

So whether one is a Dhamma server, a trustee, or an assistant—junior, senior or deputy—there should be no ego. When one thinks of authority and power, there is ego. When one thinks of service, humility is there. This quality should be in everybody. And I see that this quality is there. That is why Dhamma is spreading. And it *will* spread. I am quite confident about it. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 21, 1995
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: Vipassana plays an important role in social change. You have been carrying out its propagation since 1969. However, casteism, communalism and sectarianism are constantly on the rise. Would you like to suggest something that could eliminate these evils?

Goenkaji: There is only one way, *ekāyano maggo*, and that way is to change each individual. When you want to change society you have to change the individual. After all, society is nothing but a mass of individuals. Each man matters most. And when you talk of man, who is nothing but the combination of mind and matter, mind matters most.

So we should help people understand that since mind matters most, each individual has to change the behaviour pattern of his or her own mind in order to come out of the misery resulting from all this casteism, sectarianism and communalism. People must be shown how they are generating such negativity because of these evils of society.

When you learn Vipassana and look inside yourself you understand, "Look, as soon as I generate hatred I start harming myself. Before harming anyone else, look, I start suffering."

People don't like to suffer, but they don't realize that every time they generate negativity in their minds they are harming themselves. The first victim is oneself when one generates negativity. If more and more people begin to realize this they will start coming out of suffering. However, it takes time.

India is a country with such a large population; you should not expect the entire country to have changed in only these last twenty-five or twenty-six years. But I am very hopeful because a beginning has been made. For the last 2,000 years this wonderful law of nature, the Dhamma, has been lost to us. Fortunately the neighbouring country maintained it in its pristine purity from generation to generation, although among very few people. Now we have got it in its pure form.

Now I am sure that the results we are beginning to see will have an impact on society. If a whole jungle has withered away and you want to see it green again, each individual tree has to become green. Each tree must be watered properly at its root. When each individual tree becomes healthy, the entire jungle will become healthy. If individuals become healthy, society becomes healthy. Vipassana is doing its own job. It may take time, that can't be helped. But the results are coming and I am quite hopeful it will change society. ❧

We have heard that you are writing a detailed introduction to the Tipiṭaka, the teachings of the Buddha, which will inspire meditators.

Would you like to throw some light on this and also say when it is likely to be in print?

Well, I've taken up this job knowing full well my limited knowledge of the Pāli language. But when I read Buddha's words in the language spoken by him I feel so inspired. Before I came to Vipassana, before I came in contact with the Buddha's words, I should say I knew nothing about Buddha or about his teaching. It is shameful that when I took my first course I had not even read the *Dhammapada*. I had no knowledge at all of these teachings.

So I can quite understand that although large numbers of people here in India have respect for Buddha (of course, some say he is an incarnation of God), they know nothing about his teaching. When they come to Vipassana courses they are amazed and are so fascinated by such a wonderful teaching that they want to know more. However, for most students, to learn Pāli in order to read the Buddha's words is too large an undertaking. So I just wanted to give the gist of the teachings to inspire students. I am not a professional writer, but still I try to write.

Now the first volume will give as much information as possible about the Buddha. Not just about his physical appearance, but the Dhamma body of the Buddha, the qualities of the Buddha. For example, *Iti'pi so bhagava araham*… I try to explain the meaning of the quality *araham* and how Buddha displayed this quality. In this way, each quality of the Buddha is explained along with related incidents in order to give detailed information about the Tipiṭaka under different headings.

The next volume will be about Dhamma, to explain how Buddha was not a founder of any religion or any sect. What he taught was the law of nature; he discovered the law of nature. I would say that he was a super-scientist. Modern science seeks only our comfort. But this super-scientist sought to eliminate all our miseries in a scientific way. You see, Dhamma is not Buddhism. Buddha never taught Buddhism. He had nothing to do with Buddhism. He taught Dhamma. He called those who were following his teachings *dhammiko, dhammattho, dhammim, dhammacari, dhamma-vihari*. He never used the words *Baudda* or Buddhism. This point should be well understood by students. This is the purpose of the second volume.

The third volume will be about Sangha. It is commonly understood that anyone who wears a particular robe is Sangha. Well yes, this is apparent Sangha, no doubt. But when Buddha refers to one who has become Sangha he means that this person has reached a certain stage and has become a saint, an *ariya*. Only then is one Sangha. So many became Sangha through his teachings. This should give inspiration to the students. They will think, "I may come from a particular tradition, with a particular belief, but once starting to practise Dhamma I begin purifying my mind. In a very scientific way it is becoming more and more pure. I am on the way toward the goal of totally purifying my mind." This third volume will include examples of persons who became Sangha.

So I am trying. I don't know how successful I will be nor can I say when the work will be completed. With all the other responsibilities it will take time. But I will do my best. ❧

Each year at the Annual Conference you explain the duties and responsibilities of assist-

ant teachers, Dhamma servers and trust members. Kindly touch on these points once again so that all three groups can perform their duties in the right spirit.

Whether one is a Dhamma server or managing the organization as a trust member or serving as a Dhamma teacher (junior assistant teacher, assistant teacher, senior or teacher), it makes no difference; one is serving people. The motivation, the whole aim, should be to serve people without expecting anything in return. Expecting any kind of monetary gain is out of the question and is totally against Dhamma. No-one should commercialize Dhamma; otherwise it will be degraded and get spoiled, it will not remain Dhamma. But even expecting some kind of honour or respect from others is also prohibited. You serve without expecting anything from others.

You already get so much when you see people benefit from the technique. People come to courses with so much melancholy and sadness on their faces. And after ten days you find them leaving with blooming, bright faces. You feel so happy that you have given good service and that people have benefited so much. Later on when you get word from them that they are continuing to benefit from walking on the path you feel so happy. This is your reward, and a very good reward it is. The *pāramī* that you earn, the merits that you gain, will benefit you. Don't expect anything else from the students when you are serving.

And while serving in any capacity, a feeling of gratitude should develop within you. Never expect others to have gratitude toward you, but you yourself must be developing gratitude as well as great respect and devotion toward the Enlightened One. Buddha took great pains for us. For aeons and aeons he kept on developing his *pāramī*, making efforts to discover this wonderful technique which had been lost to humanity. If he had not taken those pains how would we have got it? So a feeling of gratitude should develop towards him. What's more, if he had decided not to teach others after becoming enlightened, how would we have received it? But out of infinite compassion he kept distributing this technique throughout his life. A boundless feeling of gratitude should develop towards the Enlightened One.

And then from generation to generation, from teacher to pupil, right from the Enlightened One to Sayagyi U Ba Khin the technique was maintained in its pristine purity. We should have a feeling of gratitude towards all of those who preserved the technique. Though it went to other countries, eventually it was lost, as happened in India. However, people in Burma, although few in number, maintained it. We should have a deep feeling of gratitude towards them. Otherwise how would we have received it?

This feeling of gratitude is a very important quality indicating that a person is developing on the path. Serve without expecting anything in return and see that gratitude is ever increasing in you.

Now, amongst yourselves, whether one is a server or a trust member or a teacher, one should not generate ego. Not the ego of feeling, "Now I have become a teacher," nor the ego of feeling, "Oh, I am just a lowly Dhamma server." You are all serving, just serving in different ways. The whole aim, the whole idea is just to serve people.

So you should have good feelings towards each other. If this feeling of goodwill is missing it will set a bad example. It shows that you have not understood Dhamma very well at all. So always keep this in mind: In whatever capacity you are serving the aim is just to serve suffering humanity, that's all. ❧

Would you be able to conduct a course exclusively for English-speaking children in the near future?

I can't say whether I will be able to personally do that, but I'll try because there is again a big need. We already have course material designed for Indian children and suitable material for English-speaking children should come up.

In India, meditators as well as non-meditators are sending their children to these courses and they are quite happy with the results. Similar things should happen in the West; although initially I told the Western students that only children of meditators should participate in the children's courses. Otherwise those parents who have not meditated with us might misunderstand what we are teaching. ❧

Are you thinking of conducting a Vipassana course exclusively for teenagers?

Certainly. There is a great need for this. We look towards the new generation to come up in Dhamma. Dhamma is good for everyone, young and old, but I want to give more attention to the young because this will ensure that Dhamma will continue to spread from generation to generation. When I started it was difficult because so few Indian youths participated. But now they are coming to courses in larger numbers. We should have courses with special discourses for them. ❧

A student asks, "I have trouble working with *sampajañña* when not sitting in meditation. Could you please offer some suggestions for working with it outside of meditation?"

According to the teaching of Buddha there must be a continuity of awareness of *anicca* within the framework of the body. This should be maintained while walking, sitting, eating, drinking; in every position, in every posture. You have to remain aware of it all the time. This takes you to the depth of your mind and helps you to eradicate deep-lying impurities there. Even at home, meditating in the morning and evening, *sampajañña* is important. But when you are engaged in your day-to-day responsibilities *sampajañña* is not necessary. You are not meditating at that time, and if you try to keep half your attention on sensations and the other half on your work you won't be successful at either activity. ❧

A magnificent pagoda has been built at Dhamma Giri. What connection does it have with our practice of Vipassana?

Well the decoration on the pagoda is like the decoration on a cake. It is the taste of the cake which is important, not merely its decoration. So the pagoda is important for the Vipassana

meditators who meditate in the cells. The decoration of the pagoda is a demonstration of gratitude. When Dhamma went from this country to neighbouring countries, the people there adopted Indian architecture as a way of remembering that this Dhamma came from India, the land of the Buddha. To this day people have so much respect and gratitude towards India because of this. When Dhamma went to Burma the original stupas built there were in the Sanchi style found near here, though later on different decorations evolved.

Similarly now, after twenty centuries Dhamma has returned from Burma. It is fitting that people here should understand this and generate feelings of gratitude towards Burma. Burma is such a wonderful Dhamma country; it maintained the purity of the technique. So all this architectural design is to remind people that the Vipassana technique comes to them from Burma and this is the reason why they're able to benefit from it.

But Guruji, one danger envisaged in this is that the pagoda is so beautiful that it might linger in our minds while meditating.

Well, it is beautiful because Dhamma is beautiful. It is a symbol of Dhamma. If it comes in your mind while meditating it will teach you the meaning behind the symbol: *anicca, anicca, anicca*; changing, changing, changing. ❧

Is it possible to play music, dance or create art without being ego-centred? Can one truly express oneself artistically with a balanced mind?

A balanced mind is very necessary. But a stage where you are totally free from ego, where the ego is totally dissolved, takes a long time. When one has reached the stage of *anāgāmī*, then at the depth of the mind the ego has significantly melted away, and at the stage of *arahant* there is no ego at all. But for ordinary Vipassana meditators, at least they have to make sure that they have started dissolving their egos. Any artist who is practising Vipassana properly will see a big change in their field of art, whatever it may be. The art will become pure in the sense that it will never be used to arouse passion in the minds of others, or anger or hatred. With the practice of Vipassana one will become a better artist with the effect that through the medium of art one will be able to give people a sense of peace and harmony. One has to judge whether this wholesome direction is developing or not. ❧

Is our tradition the only tradition of pure Dhamma?

Understand what pure Dhamma is: The law of nature, the truth about mind and matter and their interaction, how mind and matter are influencing each other and how this can be experienced. It is not the play of useless intellectual games. Buddha wanted us to experience Dhamma.

When you start experiencing the truth at the depth of the mind, you find that it is the same with everyone. Not just at the surface level, the *paritta citta*, the conscious mind, but at the depth. The problem lies at the depth of the

mind where the behaviour pattern of reaction begins. There is a Pāli word, *nati*, which means inclination. At the depth of the mind where there is an inclination towards reaction, the unwholesome process begins. For example, the reaction of anger is triggered by this inclination and one continues to react with this anger for a long time. As this repeats itself over and over again, the behaviour pattern of reacting with anger is strengthened. This happens similarly with passion or any other defilement.

For behaving like this you are responsible. No outside power is producing this behaviour. You are doing it out of ignorance. Now, with Vipassana you begin to understand, "Look at this game I'm playing. I am harming myself. I am making myself a prisoner of my own behaviour patterns." If you start observing this process deep within yourself, you will find that naturally it stops, and eventually you'll reach the stage where even this inclination towards reaction does not arise. What else can pure Dhamma be than this?

If you work at only the superficial level of the mind and either give it a good layer or else divert the attention to some other object in the attempt to come out of this pattern of reaction, you do find that the mind becomes calm. But this is only at the surface of the mind. Deep inside the same inclination towards reaction is still going on and unless you reach that point how will you really change this behaviour pattern? Vipassana is the way to reach that level and observe the reality as it is. Without your trying to change it, it will get changed if you simply observe it. In this way you are coming out of your prison, out of your bondage. This is why it is the only way, pure Dhamma, *ekāyano maggo.* ❧

What is your message to India and the world in the present context?

Make use of wonderful Dhamma. Understand what Dhamma is. Don't take it as Hindu Dhamma or Buddhist Dhamma or Jain Dhamma. It has nothing to do with these organized religions. Dhamma is totally apart from these organized religions; it is a way of life enabling us to understand the universal law of nature.

This is Dhamma: How mind and matter interact, with their currents, cross-currents and undercurrents; and how, out of ignorance we keep on reacting in ways that make us so miserable. By observing all this you realize how this law of nature applies to everyone. If you don't enjoy burning yourself, then you keep your hand out of the fire. By reacting blindly you are burning yourself, harming yourself. Experience this. Merely talking like this won't help. Let people experience it. More and more people should realize the reality of Dhamma, understanding that Dhamma has to be experienced and that it is not an intellectual game. And for experiencing it, well, here is this wonderful technique which will take you to the depth of your mind to the point where mind and matter are interacting, and where you can apply the wisdom to take you out of the habit of reaction which is actually harming you. By applying this wisdom you are making your mind purer and purer in order to live a happier life, a more harmonious life. ❧

In view of the vast expansion of our Vipassana work and its importance to humanity, do you have a vision of how it can

continue to spread in its purity in the future, even after you are not here?

Well, the people who are responsible for the spread of Dhamma must understand that the purity of the technique is the most important part of its efficacy. India lost this wonderful technique within 500 years of the Buddha. This was due to a number of reasons, but the main reason was the mixing of the technique with different rites, rituals, philosophical beliefs, etc. After some time those rituals and beliefs became more predominant than Vipassana itself, and as a result it slowly lost its efficacy. So we have to be very careful that this should not happen again. We already lost it 2,000 years ago and now that it has come again in its pure form we should maintain the purity so that it gives good results for as long as possible. The moment people start making it impure they will begin to lose the good results. People come from different traditions, from different walks of life. They should not try to impose their beliefs or their traditions on this technique. If people realize this important point then whether I am here or not, this technique will long continue to help people. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 20, 1996
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: The Dhamma makes us active, prepares us to face difficulties, and gives us strength to fight evil. Is it right to say then, when faced with difficulties, that the Dhamma will help, and to run away from the problem, to become inactive, saying, "Thinking about the problem will spoil my vibrations so I should just give *mettā*?"

Goenkaji: No. You have not understood Dhamma very well. Even in the ten-day courses it is clearly explained that if a strong person is harming a weak person, and you just sit there and say, "What can I do? Let the strong person suffer for his *kamma*, and the victim is also suffering for his *kamma*"—this is wrong. Dhamma does not teach that.

Use all your strength, physical and vocal, to stop this person. But there should not be a trace of animosity, anger or hatred towards the aggressor. You have love and compassion for this person, but he does not understand soft language. You have tried that. Now you can take the hardest action, but with love and compassion. Dhamma does not make you inactive.

But where you don't have the capacity to help—say somebody is very sick, on the deathbed, and the doctor is there treating him—now what can you do? You are not a doctor. So you sit and meditate, and give *mettā*. If you say, "I am a Vipassana meditator, so I must cure this person"—that would be a wrong decision. So wherever you are capable, you must be active. Don't allow people to do something wrong if you can stop them. ❧

Can a meditator in whose area there is no AT or children's course teacher teach Anapana to people?

Well, it has already been announced that if one is a schoolteacher, one can teach one's students, and if one is a doctor, one can teach the patients. Otherwise, no. One reason is that you shouldn't impose this technique on anyone. Another thing is that if you don't know how to teach, even though you are only teaching Anapana, Vipassana may start, and some deep-rooted complex might come on the surface. You won't know how to deal with that, so better avoid it. Don't take that risk. ❧

A serious meditator wants to join the armed forces. Should he?

This is a decision for that person. If one feels, "I'd better be a member of the armed forces because I want to defend my country," well welcome, he can do that. But on our part we cannot say, "You should join the armed forces, or you should not join." That is not our job. Each individual has to decide for oneself. ❧

If there is a blockage or blank area during meditation, I become disappointed even though I should not. What should I do?

Understand that you have accumulated so much craving and aversion in you. When you become disappointed or you feel bored, that shows that you are craving for a situation where this blockage will go away. And you have a tremendous amount of aversion towards this blockage, towards this unpleasant sensation, and you want to get rid of it. So understand the reality, "I have not understood Vipassana properly. Let me start again with Anapana. Let me come back to kindergarten and then I will proceed further." ❧

If walking on this path one can become an *arahant*, then what stage have you reached?

I have not reached the stage of an *arahant*. What stage I have reached I cannot say, there is no meaning in my saying. It is for you to judge. If all my behaviour in life is full of impurity, then I have not reached anywhere. But if you find something good in me, then certainly I have developed on this path. ❧

If every day I remember the gods in whom I have faith, then what harm is there in doing so during the course?

Because during the course the object of your meditation is different. During the course, while you are practising Anapana, the object of your meditation is respiration. That is all, nothing else. And during Vipassana, the object is the sensation on the body, nothing else. So during this time, if you also try to imagine your god or goddess, then you are diverting your attention and you are not working properly. Whatever the object of meditation, give all importance to that. At the end of the course if you have great respect or great devotion to this god or that goddess, then share your merits with him or her and send *mettā.* That's all, nothing more. ❧

Please advise us how to answer the following questions briefly: What is a sensation?

Whatever you feel at the physical level on your body, we call it a sensation.

Why do you get sensation?

Because you are alive. Your mind and matter—*nāma* and *rūpa*—are working together. Where there is no *nāma*, no mind, one cannot feel. An inanimate body cannot feel sensations. This pillar cannot feel sensations. Wherever there is life, sensations can be felt. ❧

What is equanimity?

When you don't react to sensations you experience equanimity.

What do we mean when we say not to react?

Don't generate craving for pleasant sensations. Don't generate aversion for unpleasant sensations. Then you are not reacting. ❧

What is a free-flow?

There is nothing that flows. It is only your mind which moves from head to feet, or feet to head

rapidly, because there is no obstacle on the way. Now there are no longer any blind areas or gross, solidified sensations—only very subtle vibrations of the same type. Your mind moves easily, and it feels as if a flow is there. The whole purpose is that you understand that no matter whether there are gross sensations or subtle sensations, your mind must remain equanimous. Don't react with aversion towards the gross sensations. Don't react with craving for the pleasant sensations. ❧

I belong to the armed forces. What is my duty if our country gets into a war with a neighbouring country?

Well, you have joined the armed forces to defend the country, so fulfil your duty. Naturally you will defend the country by all means. That is your duty. If you are a Vipassana meditator you will work more perfectly. ❧

Is there a past life, or life after death? If there is, what is the proof? What have you known about the past lives from your experience?

It is not necessary that first one should believe that there is a past life, or a future life, and only then will Vipassana help you. You believe that this is the present life. Give all importance to the reality of this moment. Every moment you are dying, every moment you are taking a new birth. Observe that, feel that, understand that. And also keep understanding how you react to this changing flow, and how by reacting you are harming yourself. When you come out of that, your present becomes better and better. If there is a future, certainly you will get the benefit of it. If there is no future, why worry? You have done your best to rectify your present. The future is nothing but the product of the present. If the present is all right, the future will be all right. ❧

Somebody does an evil deed and goes to the lower world. Someone else does the same amount of evil, it bears fruit immediately and he gets it over with in this life. Why is there this difference?

Because one understands what Vipassana is. In Vipassana, the fruit of the past life will come up first as a sensation on the body. If it was an evil deed, very unpleasant sensations will arise in the body. For example, if you abuse or hit somebody, you generate anger. When you generate anger you are burning inside, so whenever the fruit of this seed comes it will come with burning. When burning comes you are trained how to observe it, it loses all its strength and passes away.

Suppose a thorn has gone into your flesh. As it goes in it is very painful. If you want to take it out, you have to use a needle to go in deep. Again it is painful. Whatever sensation you experienced while performing an action, the same type of sensation you will experience while getting the fruit of it. Those who are good Vipassana meditators will observe, not react, not allow it to multiply, and it passes away. You are free from it. If you don't practise like this, then naturally you will get the fruit of it later. ❧

Even while accepting that Vipassana meditation is effective and beneficial, some feel that meditators take more interest in meditation and do not usually get inspired to solve the problems of society and of the country. Wouldn't it be proper to give students guidance and inspire them to serve society? Whether or not they actually do social work depends on their aptitude. Still, we can at least make them more cognizant of the problems of society.

Well, the whole technique is to improve each individual. The individual is more important because society is made up of individuals. This technique helps every individual to become a better person. Now, after becoming a better person, how he or she can best help others is each person's decision. It is not our job.

However, what has been happening is that some of the students start feeling, "This technique, which was lost in this country for the last twenty centuries, has now returned. It has helped me so much and I feel that more and more people should get benefit from this. This is a service to society. When more individuals become better, healthier, more wholesome, then society becomes better, healthier, more wholesome." So if someone feels that they had better serve in this way, I can't stop him or her. It is the decision of each individual how best to serve others. ❧

What is the difference between Vipassana and self-hypnotism? Does one get the same benefit from both?

No. Vipassana wants you to observe the reality as it arises naturally, not a created, artificial reality. When you start giving any kind of suggestion, it is a created experience. It is an artificial layer that you are giving over your conscious mind. This can be good, it gives results. If you are a better person at the surface of the mind you get benefit from that. But the accumulated complexes of your impurities deep inside remain as they were. So Vipassana teaches you to go deep inside and take them out by observing whatever reality manifests itself from moment to moment. No layer should be applied, nothing should be imagined, no hypnotism, no auto-suggestion. At the depth of the mind these go totally against Vipassana. These two go in totally opposite directions. ❧

It has been mentioned that in Burma there are various writings on palm leaves that VRI would like to publish before they deteriorate and are lost. If this is correct, can you tell us something about the contents and significance of these writings as well as where they originally came from?

All these palm leaves contain literature in Pāli language. Certain palm leaf texts have already been published so we won't deal with these. But there are some palm leaves with literature which has never been published. Certainly it will have something to do with Dhamma because it is in Pāli, so we want to bring it back here, print and publish it, and use it for our research. It is all to preserve the cultural inheritance of our country, which India has lost. Everything in Pāli was lost in this country. If somewhere something exists, it is our duty to bring it here and get it published and make use of it for Vipassana. ❧

In the *Vinaya Piṭaka* Buddha has censured the vow of complete silence. Why then do we keep complete silence in the course?

When this vow becomes a rite or a ritual then yes, it is harmful. But while you are meditating, when you are learning how to meditate, then his instruction is very clear: Either you have *ārya maun*, noble silence, or if you talk, you talk about Dhamma with your teacher or with your senior. That is allowed. Otherwise you have to be silent. But when it becomes like a rite—"I have taken this vow of silence, I won't speak"—yet you keep communicating with others, either by writing or by gestures or glances, then it is worthless. On a course you are silent vocally, and deep inside you work to keep your mind silent, to eradicate your impurities. This is the teaching of Buddha, you are not going against his teaching. ❧

As Sayagyi U Ba Khin never put up a sign for donations, why do we put up boards requesting donations?

Sayagyi U Ba Khin used to put up a board on which projects were mentioned, "Now this is the next project, in which this amount will be spent." That is all. If the students felt like giving, they gave. If they didn't give, they didn't. He didn't press people, "Oh look, now I want this, you had better give this much." So we are following the same procedure. ❧

We have just heard that a very large *stūpa* may be built somewhere in India. We would be interested to learn a little about this, such as where it might be located, what it is going to be like, how it is to be built, and what it is intended for. Can you tell us anything about it?

I do not yet know myself when it will be built, where it will be built, or whether it will be built or not.

One thing must be very clear: Our aim, in everything that we do, is to let people properly know about Buddha and his teaching, about Vipassana—so that they don't have any doubts about the teaching and they get inspiration to come to the courses. The benefit that people get will not be because of this pagoda but by the meditation that they will do once they have understood the actual life of Buddha. So many misunderstandings have cropped up in this country during the last twenty centuries. These must be eradicated. The real teaching of Buddha, his life, and how people benefited from it, all that will be explained—if it is possible, if it really comes up. ❧

What policy do you have for Vipassana students or assistant teachers writing books on Vipassana or pure Dhamma?

I discourage it. Unfortunately I have seen translations of Buddha's words by the so-called competent pundits, and they are totally different from what Buddha actually wanted to say. We know that it is different because we are practising. We cannot expect that somebody who does not know the technique properly would understand the theory properly. Someone might write something which is against what we are teaching here. If I don't contradict it,

then after one or two hundred years, or five hundred years, people may think, "Oh, Guruji has accepted this, it was written in his lifetime by his own student or by his assistant teacher. Certainly, this is correct." And people will be misled by that.

There is no time for me to check articles or books by my students. It is totally impossible. One of my students wrote my biography, then one of my family members brought that book to me and pointed out, "Look, such and such is written there, and this is wrong. Such and such is written on another page." I said, "All right, put a mark there and keep the book here, I will look at it." That was perhaps four or five years ago, and I still have not had time to look at those two pages. So understand, if something wrong is written in a book and I don't contradict it, then it will be considered authentic.

Don't be over-enthusiastic to write books and all that. Become perfect in meditation and teach meditation to others. Later on, when you become perfect in *pariyatti* also, yes, write. Or after my death, then you will be free to write anything. ❧

In my daily sitting of one hour, I devote at least thirty minutes to Anapana. Is it all right?

Nothing wrong. Anapana is just a tool to help you to practise Vipassana properly. Whenever you find your mind is very agitated, make use of Anapana. Maybe thirty or forty minutes, maybe for the whole hour you carry on with Anapana, and the next sitting will be much better. So Anapana is to stabilise your mind, to make it quiet and more sensitive to feel the sensations. ❧

In day-to-day life there is no exception to the rule of truth. Nobody is pardoned. Dhamma is the law par excellence. Why then is it said in Dhamma that those who make mistakes should be pardoned?

They should be pardoned because it is in your own interest. If somebody has done something which has hurt or harmed you, and you have animosity towards this person, you have started harming yourself. So to save yourself from that harm, it is better to forgive and forget. This is in your own interest. If this person also realizes, "I have made a mistake, and I won't repeat that in the future," and keeps practising Vipassana, he or she will come out of misery. You are giving this person a pardon for your own benefit, because this helps you to come out of your feelings of revenge. ❧

I am always lost in thoughts, forgetful, reticent. I don't feel like working and am always behind in work. Is this *anattā*? If yes, then why has my silence put a distance between me and my family?

Because you have not understood Vipassana properly, you have not practised properly. So naturally you are becoming estranged from your friends and family, and you don't know how to deal with them. If you understand Vipassana properly, then whenever you are depressed—you have a complex of depression from the past and it has arisen—accept the fact that at this moment the mind is full of depression. This is the truth. Not depression for this or that reason. The fact is, "My mind is full of depression at this moment. Now let me see what sensation I have."

Whatever sensation you have at that moment in any part of your body is related to that depression, and you start observing the sensations. You accept the fact that there is depression and the fact that there are sensations, and keep observing the sensations understanding *anicca*. You have been practising so you know, "This sensation is arising and passing, and so this depression is also arising and passing. Let me see how long it lasts." You are equanimous and certainly it will pass away, you will start coming out of your habit pattern of depression. This is how to make use of this situation. ❧

It seems that most meditators understand the technique of meditation. Many even get free-flow. They sit many courses. But their wisdom is not seen in their behaviour. Is there need for more discourses to progress?

No. Such people may take even a hundred courses without it helping them in any way because actually they have not understood the technique. The technique is not to get elated when you have pleasant sensations, and not to get depressed when you have unpleasant sensations. If no change comes that means they are playing the game of sensations—if it is pleasant they feel elated, if it is unpleasant, depressed—and they will continue not to get any benefit. So understand the technique properly. Pleasant or unpleasant, your understanding is, "Everything that I am experiencing is *anicca*, changing. There is no meaning to react towards something which is constantly changing." You are observing equanimously. Then you work properly and a change starts manifesting in your day-to-day life. ❧

Many people in India live in poverty. Do these people have to suffer like this because they have bad kamma of the past?

Well, if you believe in the law of nature, that as you sow, so you will reap, then certainly they do. Anybody who is suffering must have done something wrong in the past. But this should not make you feel, "I will never come out of my misery, I have done so much wrong in the past and my destiny is such." All the past kamma that you have done is done. Your present kamma is important and so powerful. If you are a Vipassana meditator, have confidence. If a person like Aṅgulimāla, who had killed 999 people in this very life (and we don't know what he had done in the past), could eradicate his past kamma by the practice of Vipassana, why have pessimism? Have all the optimism. You have this wonderful technique by which you can come out of all your misery. ❧

Can an AT celebrate their birthday ceremony in the centre, and in the name of celebrating the birthday ask someone to sit a course and give *dāna* to the centre for all the expenses of that day?

Well certainly any AT or non-AT, any Vipassana meditator can come here and meditate on their birthday. Or you can meditate in your own house. This is the best way to celebrate your birthday. But it is not very healthy that you ask others to meditate for your birthday. Others may or may not meditate. If you are an AT this does not mean that you should ask all your students to come and meditate. You meditate. Whatever donation you want to give you are free to give, there is no objection to that. ❧

While walking or lying down, is it enough to observe the incoming or outgoing breath without concentrating on the point where it touches?

Well, if you feel the touch, good, but otherwise if you are only aware of the inhalation-exhalation, good enough. This will help you because you are with the truth, the reality. ❧

When is a human being able to decide that he or she is to wait for a *sammāsambuddha* before taking a dip in *nirvāṇa*?

It can happen in the next moment, why wait for a *sammāsambuddha*? You just do your job and leave the result to Dhamma. As I keep saying in the long courses, *kālaṃ āgameyya*, let the time ripen. When the time ripens, automatically you will dip. So keep doing your job: observing sensations, remaining equanimous. Then you are coming nearer and nearer to *nirvāṇa*.

May all of you get a dip in this very life. Keep on working and forget about the results. Leave the result to Dhamma. May all of you be happy, be peaceful, be liberated. ❧

If a pagoda is being constructed at a centre, should the shape be standard, or is some other form also possible, such as a temple or a mosque-like form?

Well it could be a temple or a mosque, nothing wrong with that. But the architecture should be meaningful. There must be cells in it where people can sit and meditate. When we have a shape exactly according to the *stūpas* in Burma it reminds us that we lost this wonderful technique and Burma maintained it. We generate gratitude every time we see this structure. For centuries people will feel grateful to Burma. When this technique went to Burma, then along with it went the architecture of this country. They made *stūpas* like the Sāñci *stūpa* and later on all the decorations came. The form was of Sāñci *stūpa* to remind them that the Dhamma came from India. They were so grateful to India. ❧

In many courses teachers behave like disciplinarians. Why don't they behave like a mother as you do?

Well, let them become a mother like me and then they will start behaving like this. They are learning how to become a mother and you are learning how to practise Vipassana. I have been getting good feedback about many of the assistant teachers or deputy teachers or teachers. People come and say, "I had such a wonderful experience under this teacher. He was full of compassion. She was full of goodwill. Look, he or she explained things to me so well." I am happy about this. However it is quite possible that there might be some who have not worked in an ideal way. Don't give importance to that. Understand that they are under training and you are also under training. They are in training how to teach and you are in training how to learn. Carry on your job, learn. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 21, 1996
CLOSING ADDRESS

DHAMMA IS FOR ALL

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

Once again we have gathered together for our annual meeting. Now that the Dhamma work is spreading around the world and more servers, teachers and centres are arising, it is natural that the gathering is bound to become bigger. It is a good sign. But when those who serve Dhamma increase in number, we have to be very careful to maintain the purity of Dhamma service. If people just come to serve and they don't know why or what they are serving, they may start harming Dhamma and harming themselves.

"Why am I serving? Why am I giving so much time to all this?" One has to examine oneself. "I am serving to get fame and a good position. Today, I am just an ordinary Dhamma server, but it is possible that after my teacher sees my service he may make me a trustee. And later on I may become a junior assistant teacher, and then an assistant teacher, and then a teacher. Ah, this is my goal, to become a full-fledged teacher! And then I will have power, prestige and authority. I will be the ruler of one zone!"

Mad fellow! You have not understood Dhamma at all! You had better meditate and wait for some time, don't start serving. So long as this "I" is there you are not working for others, you are working for yourself—there is no *anattā*, it is all *attā*. You have not helped yourself in Dhamma, how can you help others in Dhamma? Keep on examining yourself.

Service is for *bahujana-hitāya, bahujana-sukhāya*, for the welfare and good of many people. Your benefit automatically comes because of the law of nature. When you are serving in Dhamma then your *pāramīs* are developing and you will reach the final goal easily.

The Enlightened One said that there are two types of people who are very rare in the world. What two types? One type is *pubbakāri*. That means one who takes the initiative to serve others, who takes the first step. Now if the first step is your thought, "What will I gain?" and then your service follows—this is not *pubbakāri*. Think of service first and forget what you will get. Do not expect anything in return. "As I have started coming out of misery little by little, let more and more people come out of it. I have been given this wonderful technique, let more and more get benefit from it." *Pubbakāri* is a very important quality of a Dhamma person.

And then there is the person who feels *kataññū*—gratitude. If you think, "I have this technique now. What have I to do with Gotama the Buddha?"—then you have not under-

stood Dhamma. Where did you get the Dhamma from? As a *bodhisatva* for countless lives he kept on developing his *pāramīs*. In every life he served people in this or that way, for millions of lives.

Understand that when he came in contact with Dīpaṅkara Buddha if he had taken Vipassana, he had the *pāramīs* to make himself an *arahant* immediately. But he thought, "No, I do not want only my own liberation. Let me become a *sammāsambuddha* and serve countless people. While developing my *pāramīs* I will also serve others." And with that determination he kept on developing his *pāramīs*. He took such pains for so many lives. For whom? For us. If he had just used this technique to liberate himself and not distributed it, then how would we have got it? Out of infinite compassion he started distributing the Dhamma.

And then from teacher to pupil the technique was maintained, especially in our neighbouring country, Burma. India was very unfortunate and within five hundred years lost it. But the neighbouring country has maintained it for the last 2,500 years—although among very few people. So a feeling of gratitude should arise.

Sometimes somebody will question me, "Why is this pagoda here? Why not a temple, a mosque or a church?" The pagoda is a symbol of gratitude. When Dhamma went from this country to Burma, then the Burmese people were grateful and remembering where it came from they chose a symbol of this country—the architecture of the Sāñci *stūpa* was taken there. In Burma *stūpas* were made resembling the Sāñci *stūpa* so that the locals would keep on remembering India. Of course other ornaments, like Christmas cake ornaments, all came later on. Still, in Sagaing, [near Mandalay in Burma] they have a *stūpa* in the same Sāñci style.

Now that Dhamma has come here from that country, we use the Burmese-style pagoda as a symbol of gratitude, to remind us that Vipassana has returned from Burma. For centuries let people remember that we lost this wonderful gem and our neighbouring country maintained it in its pristine purity. We generate a feeling of gratitude towards that country, and a feeling of gratitude towards all the teachers who maintained this in its pristine purity.

The Buddha said, "Those who have a strong feeling of gratitude and a wish to serve others without expecting anything are very rare people." So these two qualities are very important to those who want to work in the field of Dhamma.

Another very important thing is that you maintain the technique in its pristine purity. Why was it lost in this country? Our research organization will explore all the different fields of this subject. Many reasons will crop up, but one reason that I see is that when various sects found this to be a very impressive, result-oriented technique, they thought, "If somehow we can get this technique for our sect, it will be wonderful. Otherwise our people will run to it and our sect will become weak." Once they took the technique into their sect and added their own sectarian aspects to it, the technique became ineffective and it withered away.

On our part we give the technique freely, and if somebody pollutes it, adding something else, that is his or her responsibility, we don't worry. On our part we will maintain it in its pris-

tine purity. Those who are working in the field of serving others with this pure technique should not add anything. No addition is required—*paripuṇṇa*, it is complete. *Parisuddha*—it is pure, totally pure, nothing needs to be taken out of it.

One may feel, out of misguided compassion, "Well, if I add a little bit of this, people from that community will come, otherwise they won't. Just to help them I will add this, I will add that, I will add the other." And slowly these additions will make the whole technique impure and its effectiveness will be lost. So there is no compromise so far as technique is concerned.

Understand what the technique is. We are here to observe the truth that we experience within ourselves pertaining to the interaction of mind and matter. How they keep on influencing each other and how because of this contact of mind and matter a sensation arises, pleasant or unpleasant, and how out of ignorance we start reacting to it. If we observe it objectively, our habit pattern of reaction goes away. It is so simple. What is the necessity of adding anything else to this?

You have to become established in Dhamma and see that you help others to get established in Dhamma. And this is possible when you keep the whole technique pure and universal. The moment you start adding something, it will take a sectarian turn. And once it takes a sectarian turn, the essence of Dhamma will be lost and then the technique will get lost. Work very cautiously and wisely.

Buddha never established a sect. He established pure Dhamma. Throughout about 15,000 pages of his words, the word Buddhist or *Bauddh(a)* is never found. Five hundred years after Buddha this word was used for the first time. For five hundred years nobody called oneself a *Bauddh(a)*, or called the teaching of Buddha as *Bauddh(a)*.

Some question arose in the neighbouring countries when in an interview I was asked,
"Are you teaching Buddhism?"
I said, "No, I am not teaching Buddhism."
"Hey, you are not teaching Buddhism? Then you are not converting people to Buddhism?"
"No, I am not converting people to that."
"Then you are not Buddhist?"
"No, I am not Buddhist."
"You are not Buddhist. You are not teaching Buddhism. You are not converting people to Buddhism!"

And this started spreading in the neighbouring countries, "This is a very ungrateful fellow. He took Dhamma from our country and now he is using it for his own purpose. He is not converting people to our religion." Oh, such a big confusion started!

Fortunately I was invited there and then I explained, "Now tell me, did Buddha convert anybody to Buddhism? How many Buddhists did he make? Among his own students Moggallāyan was of a *brāhman* clan, a *gotra*. He didn't say, 'Now you become Bauddhāyan instead of Moggallāyan.' Kātyāyan is a *brāhman*

clan. He never said, 'From today onwards you will be called a Bauddhāyan.' He never converted people to any sect, so who am I to convert anyone? Am I far superior? Am I far more enlightened than Buddha? Go through the Buddha's words: Do you find this word Buddhist anywhere?" And then they realized, "Yes, you are correct."

If it is Buddhism, it will remain limited to certain people who call themselves Buddhists. Buddhism is for Buddhists, Hinduism for Hindus, but Dhamma is for all, Vipassana is for all. Dhamma is infinite—*appamāṇo dhammo*. These are the words of Buddha; you must not make this *appamāṇo dhammo,* infinite Dhamma, finite. So you must understand from the very beginning that you are not here to convert people and make them Buddhist. No, make them Dhammist.

We have found only five words or six words in the Tipiṭaka that the Buddha used for those who were following him, developing on the path of Dhamma: *dhammiko, dhammaṭṭho, dhammī, dhammacārī, dhammavihārī*. They are becoming Dhammist, not Buddhist.

So we must be very careful. We must work understanding fully well that on the one hand we have a feeling of great gratitude towards Gotama the Buddha. But at the same time we have nothing to do with any sect, we are not here to convert people to this or that religion.

We have to give importance to the Dhamma taught by Buddha so that we get established in Dhamma and help others to do so. Let them call themselves by any name, what difference does it make? People should become *dhammiko,* Dhammic. They should get established in Dhamma, lead a Dhamma life, so that they are happier and more peaceful. Once one really becomes a Dhammic person, naturally one will be far away from sectarian things. This is the yardstick to measure whether or not one is really established in Dhamma. If one becomes more and more sectarian, understand that this person is far away from Dhamma.

Keep all that in mind. Keep on growing in Dhamma for your good and for the good of all others. May Dhamma grow so that more and more people come out of their miseries, without getting entangled in this or that sect. Let them grow in Dhamma. May Dhamma spread for the good of the people, for the benefit of the people.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

KAOSHIUNG, TAIWAN
JULY 24, 1996

SERVING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

My dear Dhamma servers:

During the last year many of you have given such worthy service that Vipassana has started to spread on this island of Dhamma. For a Vipassana meditator to progress on the path of purification, Dhamma service is important. The Buddha's teaching is that you should serve yourself first and then start serving others. If you want to purify your mind but do not generate love and compassion for others, the wish to help them to come out of suffering, you are certainly not progressing on the path of Dhamma.

Continue to purify your mind and at the same time help others so they can purify their own minds. It is not healthy to purify yourself while forgetting others, and it is not healthy to try to help others without purifying yourself. If you are not strong, how can you help another weak person to become strong?

I know with my own experience and with the experience of so many of my students that when you serve others in Dhamma, your own meditation becomes stronger and the process of purification becomes more effective. When you help others to progress in the Dhamma you develop your *pāramī* of *dāna*, and of all possible gifts, the donation of the Dhamma is the highest. Every donation you make is helpful to you, no doubt, but this donation gives you the maximum benefit because you are giving something of maximum value to the recipient. Someone who receives the gift of the Dhamma gets the path of purification and starts to come out of all the miseries of life. Therefore the Buddha announced, *Sabba dānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*—The donation of the Dhamma is the highest donation.

During a course it appears that the Teacher is giving the *dāna* of Dhamma but actually Dhamma cannot be given unless there are servers to help, so the servers share in the process. If there were nobody to manage or to prepare food, how could a Vipassana course be held? The *dāna* of Dhamma is a cooperative effort by the Teacher and the servers, and the servers also receive the fruit of the Dhamma *dāna*.

Sometimes people tell me, "It is wonderful that you have been successful in distributing Dhamma single-handedly to so many people around the world." I reply that I have not done this single-handedly. I have only two hands but Dhamma has thousands of hands—the hands of the Dhamma servers.

When I first went to India I was unsure whether I could teach Dhamma there. This technique makes a deep operation and purifies the mind at the root level. To learn it, residential courses are essential, but I had no one to help me arrange the necessary facilities. Fortunately, a distant relative of mine from Burma offered to assist, and it was because of his great service that the first course was arranged. And then

the Wheel of Dhamma started rotating once again in the country of its origin. Later on, others who had participated in courses offered their services and thus courses could be held not only in India but around the world.

Whenever I remember the man who managed the first course in India I feel very grateful to him. Can anyone measure the merits that this person acquired in arranging the first Vipassana course outside Burma? And then a large number of meditators around the world started helping. Can anyone measure the merits that these servers have acquired by organising Dhamma courses for suffering people? That is why I say that every Dhamma server participates in this great donation of the Dhamma around the world.

In daily life there are many ups and downs. To maintain equanimity and to generate love and compassion despite these vicissitudes is the training of Vipassana. When Vipassana meditators give Dhamma service, they learn in a healthy atmosphere how to apply Dhamma in life.

While giving service you come across different types of meditators. Some may be lazy, or talkative, or rude. Sometimes an immature Dhamma server reacts in kind and replies rudely, or behaves like a gaoler. But you are trained that, in spite of any mistakes made by the students, you must not become angry. Instead you must maintain a balanced mind filled with love and compassion. You keep making mistakes and correcting yourself, and in this way you learn how to face unwanted situations equanimously. In the atmosphere of a Dhamma centre or course it is easier to learn how to face various situations, and then you can start to apply this wisdom in your daily life. This is a training ground for each server to learn how to live a good life.

The Buddha said that a good Dhamma person has two qualities: the quality of selflessly serving others and the quality of gratitude for help received. These two qualities are rare. A Dhamma server has the opportunity to develop both. You practise serving others without expecting anything in return, and you start to develop a feeling of gratitude towards the Buddha, who discovered this wonderful technique and gave it to the world, and towards the chain of teachers, right from the Buddha up to today, who maintained this technique in its pristine purity. One feels like repaying the debt of gratitude by serving others in order to fulfil the mission of the Teacher.

One feels so happy and contented serving others and helping them to come out of their misery. Therefore Dhamma service works both ways: It helps others, and it helps the Dhamma server too.

May you all gain strength in Dhamma for your own benefit, and may you continue to serve others for the good and benefit of so many.

May the Dhamma of purification given by the Buddha spread not only in this island of Dhamma, the island of Taiwan, but may it also arise and spread in the country of its origin and from there may it spread around the world.

May the island of Taiwan become a beacon of Dhamma and spread the light of wisdom throughout the world.

May all be happy, be peaceful, be liberated.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 11, 1997
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: We are able to observe the sensations on the body with some equanimity. But how do we observe thoughts and emotions with equanimity?

Goenkaji: It is not necessary to observe the thoughts. Only accept the fact that now there is some chattering going on in the mind; that is good enough. Any thought or emotion that arises in the mind can't arise without a sensation on the body. When you are working with the sensations you are working at the root level of your mind. You are purifying your mind at the root level. So be with the sensation, and just accept the fact that some chattering or emotion is going on, that is all. Don't go into the details of the thoughts or emotions. ❧

While meditating sometimes it appears as if I have no body, and my body is moving around in the air. What should I do?

You have breath all right, you are still breathing! That shows the body is there, so work with the breath. Keep the mind calm with the breath; let it become more attentive, more subtle, and it will start feeling the body. ❧

You expound the teachings of the Buddha but don't call them Buddhist. Why don't you disseminate the Buddhist Dhamma?

Well, Buddha never taught Buddhist Dhamma. He taught only Dhamma. Who am I to teach Buddhist Dhamma? I am just a son of Buddha and I got this as an inheritance from Buddha. So I must teach exactly as Buddha taught. If we call it Buddhist Dhamma then it will remain limited to a certain community only. But Dhamma is unlimited, it is for all. The Buddhist Dhamma will be for the Buddhists, Hindu Dhamma will be for the Hindus, and Jain Dhamma will be for the Jains. It makes it limited, whereas Dhamma is unlimited. So it is better to teach Dhamma, which anybody can practise and get the same results, same benefit. ❧

What is the difference between *nibbāna*, *parinibbāna*, and *mahāparinibbāna*?

In this country unfortunately the word *nibbāna*, which is *nirvāṇa* in the language here, is very wrongly understood. Thousands of years have passed away, and people have lost the technique by which you can experience this *nibbānic* stage within this life. So here the meaning has been taken as death.

I remember a case just a few months after I came from Burma, where a student came and paid respect to me. I said, "May you get *nibbāna* soon." And he was shocked, "I have come here to get from you a blessing of long life, and you are cursing me that I should die soon!"

Poor person, he didn't know the meaning of the word *nirvāṇa*. Within this life while practising you experience something beyond mind and matter; that is *nibbāna*. *Parinibbāṇa* is used for when an *arahant* dies. After that there is no more birth for this person. And *mahāparinibbāna* is for a *mahāpuruṣa* like Buddha. When he dies there is no more birth; that is *mahāparinirvāna*. ❧

Is there any special benefit gained by meditating on the full moon night and new moon night, and on the eighth day of the lunar cycle?

There is always special benefit. Whenever you meditate, you get special benefit from it. But you have to meditate. All these rules were made so that at least once a week people would find time for meditation. That is why this advice was given. ❧

Do garlic and onions affect our meditation?

Well, decide for yourself. If you see it is harming your meditation through your own experience, leave it. I know with my own experience, that it is not very good, so I don't like to take it. In the Indian centres we don't allow it for students, but if you feel it is all right for you, there is no restriction. ❧

What is *Buddha-dhātu*? Recently the government of India gave a gift to the government of Thailand of some *Buddha-dhātu*. What is that? What is the difference between *Buddha-dhātu*, *Dhamma-dhātu* and *Saṅgha-dhātu*?

Whatever relics were left after the Buddha's passing away and cremation have their own vibrations. So in countries where Buddha Dhamma is being practised people would like to pay respect, and also to meditate with that vibration. This government has some of these relics, so they take them to those countries and people pay respect, and some might meditate. That is *Buddha-dhātu*.

Dhamma-dhātu is Dhamma vibration. *Dhātu* means vibration—*attano sabhāvaṃ dhāretī'ti dhammā*. Every vibration has its own nature. So, there is a Dhamma vibration because of the Dhamma nature. When you meditate you are experiencing that *Dhamma-dhātu*.

Saṅgha-dhātu—there is no such thing as *Saṅgha-dhātu*. But *saṅgha* means saintly people. So saintly people—the kind of sensations or vibrations they are generating—you may call that *Saṅgha-dhātu*. ❧

At my home if the morning chanting tape is played, is it necessary to meditate?

When you are listening to these chantings and at the same time you are aware of what is happening within you, it will have a better effect. But when you are meditating it is not essential that you play a chanting tape. ❧

Is it proper for Dhamma servers to take a little refreshment before serving the students?

Well, if you are very hungry and feel it will be too long a time before your breakfast, take it, we don't object. But otherwise, it is always good if you first serve the guests who have come, and then take your food. ❧

What is the difference between sectarian beliefs and Dhamma beliefs?

Beliefs are always sectarian. Dhamma has no belief. In Dhamma you experience, and then you believe. There is no blind belief in Dhamma. You must experience and then only believe whatever you have experienced. ❧

My mind still remains immersed in lust, as a result of which the continuity of practice is not maintained. Kindly suggest a way out.

Fight out your battle. Lust is something which keeps on following you from life to life. It is a very deep *saṅkhāra*. Whenever lust arises in the mind, don't get involved in the object of the lust. Just accept the fact: lust as lust. "At this moment my mind is full of lust." Accept this, and see what sensation you have. At that moment whatever sensation you are feeling predominantly anywhere in the body, start observing it—understanding *anicca*, *anicca*, this is not permanent, this is not permanent. This lust that has come is also not permanent, let me see how long it lasts. If you do this, the lust becomes weaker and weaker and passes away. ❧

Lack of will-power and laziness are obstructing my meditation. Could you kindly give me some advice.

Develop will-power, strong will-power. If you are so weak that you keep on breaking your decision to meditate every day in the morning and evening, then decide that you won't take your breakfast without having sat for one hour. How many days will you miss your breakfast? You will start practising daily. And so far as laziness or drowsiness is concerned, just examine yourself. If the laziness is because of lack of sleep, then sleep for some time. Get refreshed. But if you find this laziness is because of your mental impurity which has become a barrier for you, then fight it out. Have hard breathing for some time, sprinkle some cold water on the eyes, stand up, walk. Somehow or the other, get rid of it. ❧

Does a being take rebirth immediately, or after some time?

It is immediate, there is no gap.

Does the birth start in the womb or after the child is born?

As conception happens, at that moment. ❧

Should I only observe the sensations and let Dhamma do the rest? Or should I also make a conscious effort by thought or by other ways to understand *anicca*?

Not only by thought, but by experience. You are observing sensations and you are experiencing, "Well look, it is *anicca*." Then it works. If you are just experiencing sensation and you don't understand, "This is impermanent," how will you develop equanimity, how will you develop *paññā*? ❧

We have heard that a large pagoda is being built near Mumbai. What is the purpose of this pagoda? How is it related to our meditation?

The pagoda is a pagoda, and it will be for meditation. You see, unfortunately during the last 2,000 years people in this country have lost, I will say really totally lost, the truth about Buddha and the truth about Buddha's teaching. Not only lost, but distorted it in a way that misleads people. Unfortunately there have been some episodes of the Buddha's life shown on TV here, which have created more confusion. Then how can we give people the correct information?

So an idea came to have a huge monument—and there are people to help to get it done—with a gallery where Buddha, his life and his teaching will be shown. People will come out of curiosity to find out what this monument is, and they will get all this information.

Moreover, it will be used for meditation. Fortunately we have been able to procure some genuine relics of Buddha. The Mahabodhi Society has agreed that they will give some part of the relics that they have. And some have been sent by the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka to be kept there. So all serious students can sit in that pagoda and meditate. And I know with my personal experience: The vibration of Buddha relics is so strong that the whole atmosphere will get charged with that. Moreover, it will be a huge area—about 350 feet in diameter, a circular hall under a 350-foot-high pagoda. About 10,000 people will be able to sit there. Quite possibly a time may come when people would like to have Anapana taught—even for a few minutes. All right, we might give mass Anapana.

Let me explain a little more about this pagoda project. This is not only for a pagoda. Now we have so much difficulty here at Dhamma Giri. Applications come in such large numbers and people have to wait sometimes for months to get their turn. I feel very sorry because of that, but we are helpless. If we allow more than 500 people here—if we construct more buildings—the centre will become so difficult to manage. But there is so much demand. What can be done? So along with this pagoda there will be a huge area—negotiations are going on now—of about 100 acres or more. Besides the pagoda, behind it, there will be a centre.

Here at Dhamma Giri we have simultaneous courses—30-day courses, 45-day courses, along with simultaneous 10-day courses. I know very well that students who are taking such long, deep courses are disturbed when the ten-day students come—vibration-wise it is not very helpful. So I feel it is necessary that we must have a centre where only long courses are given. Two courses should not be given simultaneously. Either here or there will be only long courses, or at a centre between Mumbai and Igatpuri—say about one or one and a half hours away from Mumbai and about one and a half hours from Igatpuri. At times maybe one centre will have only long courses, and the other will have regular courses. At times the other centre will have long courses, and this centre will have shorter ones. We will distribute the work like that. That is another reason.

A third reason cropped up: Your Teacher is getting old, white-haired. So he has sympathy for people who are getting old. Many elderly people want to spend the rest of their life in a Dhamma atmosphere. So we are going to have a Dhamma village. Between the pagoda and

this centre there will be a Dhamma village where people will own their own residences. And in that atmosphere of Dhamma there will be residences for people who are comfortably off—they can have some small mini-farmhouses, some bungalows, two bedrooms, one drawing room, a kitchen, etc. There will also be accommodation for people who cannot afford that much but want to live there. There will be all sorts of facilities for people. They can come and stay there for one or two months, or stay for the whole life; there is no objection. There will also be an old age home where no money is involved. The whole atmosphere in this old age home will be suffused with Dhamma. In the Vipassana village and old age home only Vipassana meditators will stay, nobody else. The whole atmosphere must be a Vipassana atmosphere. In the old age home where no money is involved, you get your food, your residence and all facilities for meditation. There will be a Dhamma hall, perhaps a pagoda will be constructed, and you can meditate very easily.

Another important thing that is going to develop there is an institute on a big scale. Here at Dhamma Giri people come to learn Pāli. We know what difficulty they have to face. Even for their residence they have to keep moving from one room to the other. We don't have sufficient residences for the Pāli scholars. And when they are living here for a long time, people expect them to be doing Dhamma service. Sometimes the management think they are just learning Pāli for one or two hours a day so they should be doing other things as well. It can put a big burden on them.

So there will be an institute where they can work and study Pāli, Sanskrit, Hindi, whatever they like, and the words of Buddha in detail; and they will get good accommodation, their own residences. The whole atmosphere will be such that meditators can work better and be their own masters. So the plan is also for this purpose. This is a dream of your Teacher. I hope it will be fulfilled. ❧

A *sammāsambuddha* is a being that rediscovers the technique of Vipassana. Does it mean that no meditator can ever be a *sammā-sambuddha*?

Why not? A meditator can be a *sammāsambuddha* but it takes time, it is not easy. When we say that a *sammāsambuddha* rediscovers the technique, that means somebody becomes a *sammāsambuddha* only at a time when the technique is totally lost. Otherwise he is not a *sammāsambuddha*. He has to rediscover something which is totally lost. So he takes his last birth at a time when the technique of Vipassana is totally lost in the world and he rediscovers it. ❧

According to the prophecy of the monk *Mogaliputta Tissa*, a *bodhisattva* was going to set in motion the Dhamma wheel once again from *Jambudīpa* 2,500 years after the *mahāparinibbāna* of Gotama the Buddha. What was the year and who was that *bodhisattva*?

Who was that *bodhisattva*? The truth is that now the *dhammacakka* has started, Dhamma has

started. That is all. Why worry about who started it? Then you may start paying respect to this person, and praying and expecting something from him. ❧

Can Vipassana be called the practical teaching of J. Krishnamurti?

Vipassana is the practical teaching of Buddha. J. Krishnamurti also might take some help from Buddha, but it is Buddha's technique. ❧

Is *mettā* some sort of energy? Is it limitless? Does the amount of *mettā* increase and decrease over time?

Well, every individual generates *mettā*. So it increases and decreases according to the capacity of the individual. If the individual becomes purer and purer, the *mettā* becomes stronger and stronger. If the mind of the meditator is very weak or full of impurity, then the *mettā* is very weak. It is generated by the meditator. ❧

An enlightened being remembers his or her past lives. Does that mean that the mind actually follows the flow of *saṅkhāras* from life to life?

Certainly. It is the mind which flows from life to life carrying all these *saṅkhāras*. When one reaches the stage where one gets such purity, one develops the power to remember situations from past lives—the truth of past lives. One can certainly reach that stage. ❧

Is there any difference between *mana* and *citta*?

No. It is just a difference in nomenclature. Mind—*mana*, *citta*, and *viññāṇa*—all three have the same meaning. ❧

Why are the seat covers of ATs white and those of students blue? [Laughter]

[Laughs] There is a difference between ATs and the students, so the seats must also be different. ❧

I work for five months of the year in a job which I like very much. The rest of the year I can serve at a centre, which I also like very much to do. But I feel irresponsible because I am not saving for the future. Do you think it is good to spend a lot of time in centres?

Well if you feel irresponsible then better be responsible. Why do you feel irresponsible? If you feel that you must save something for your future, then instead of working for five or six months, work a month more and get that money for your future, and the rest of the time serve. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 9, 1997
OPENING ADDRESS

THE SWEETNESS OF DHAMMA

Reverend *Bhikkhusangha* and my Dhamma children:

In the work you are going to accomplish here, sweetness is important. If there is Dhamma, there is bound to be sweetness. This is the yardstick: Sweetness must come in life. You have come here to exchange your views and experiences, but if you are attached to your views and argue that whatever you say is correct, you will lose all the sweetness.

The Enlightened One's words should keep ringing in your ears: Be like milk and water joined together, inseparable, full of sweetness. The whole Dhamma field must always be full of sweetness.

By mistake you might use certain harsh words to justify your view. If you know that you have hurt somebody but think, "What else could I do? I was correct and that fellow couldn't understand it," then your thoughts are still full of aversion. Don't try to justify your mistakes, accept them, "I made a mistake, either from ignorance or my weakness which allowed anti-Dhamma forces to overpower me. I will be careful not to do this in future." Give the balm of *mettā* now.

How quickly do you realize your mistake and start generating *mettā*? How long do you work on *mettā*, and how deeply? That is the yardstick of your progress. Understand this and see that the atmosphere always remains full of Dhamma, full of sweetness.

You are all gathering here now because you want Dhamma to spread. Why do you want Dhamma to spread? Not to establish a sect. If a sect is established and more people start calling themselves Buddhists what would anyone gain by that? Let people keep calling themselves Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist or Jewish, what difference will it make? The human mind keeps on generating impurity, negativity and misery. If one calls oneself this name or that, does the mind change? No, the mind remains the same with the same habit pattern. Names won't help. Change the habit pattern of the mind, and here is a wonderful technique which will do this. By practising Vipassana one realizes, "Yes, it works! It has purified my mind, if only a little, and whatever impurities have gone, that much misery has gone. Oh, this is such a wonderful technique! Everyone, all around the world is miserable. May more and more people get this wonderful technique and come out of their misery!"

When you see others really enjoying happiness, peace and harmony, then sympathetic joy arises. Seeing others joyful makes you feel joyful, and this joy multiplies. You smile seeing so many people smiling. You are serving others for this purpose, not to develop ego. There should be no status, no power, no position. You serve whether you have this or that responsibility. You are serving to make yourself happier and to make others happier. This is Dhamma.

Keep this in mind and work. Distribute this wonderful Dhamma for your good and for the good of so many suffering people around the world. May pure Dhamma spread. May more and more people start practising Dhamma to enjoy real peace, harmony, happiness.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 11, 1997
CLOSING ADDRESS

A NEW ERA OF DHAMMA

My dear Dhamma children:

During the last few days you have had your annual discussions and meetings. Every organization has certain rites and rituals, and annual conferences are part of these: Reports must be read, committees formed, resolutions passed, and there must be a welcoming and a closing address.

But this is a Dhamma organization, and we need to have an ongoing process of introspection day by day, not just once a year. There is nothing wrong in meeting together at the beginning of the year for discussion, but see that it doesn't become just a rite or a ritual; see that the results of the conference really are for the benefit of others. Some mistakes may have been made; now see that they do not happen in the future. There are certain good points, virtues; well, how can we increase those virtues?

We have been experimenting, because this is new for me also. Whatever history we know from Ledi Sayadaw to today is from the past era of 2,500 years. I am fortunate to be here for the beginning of the next 2,500 years when the Dhamma has to spread, and it is spreading. There is bound to be a crisis of growth, there will be difficulties, problems. I or my Dhamma sons or Dhamma daughters might make mistakes, but we should learn from those mistakes.

Last year we made some experiments which gave good results and we learned from them, and this year we will continue to experiment. The aim is to serve more and more people so that they gain the greatest benefit.

This year we will have separate teachers taking full responsibility for separate centres. Perhaps next year we will ask others to serve, as we have to train more and more teachers. We will also have some teachers who are not assigned to look after a centre, but to work on particular projects. In this way we will continue to experiment so that we pass on to future generations ideal ways of spreading Dhamma.

In two years' time it will be 1999, which is an important year as it is both the birth centenary of my Dhamma father, Sayagyi U Ba Khin, and also we will be taking Vipassana into the next millennium. The spread of Vipassana must be so strong and pure that it continues to serve people for centuries, for the good and benefit of so many. Let us be good vehicles for the spread of Dhamma. May you all get real Dhamma energy and more strength, so that you can serve better than you have. I am happy with whatever has been done in the past, but it is just a good beginning; there is much more to do.

One task that we have accomplished is in the field of *pariyatti*: We have edited and are publishing all the Pāli literature—about 140 volumes—in Devanagari script. We want to collect and publish all Buddha's words that are available in Sanskrit and other scripts, and also material that is written on palm leaves, so that we can make a comparative study of all this. We also want to investigate why the wonderful, result-oriented teaching of Vipassana was lost in this and other countries. We do not wish to condemn anybody, but the truth must be found so that such things do not happen in the future.

To complete all this we have a lot of work to do. The Dhamma family is increasing, and I want it to increase—family planning is not for us! Because Dhamma must spread, the family should be bigger and bigger, and these thousands of hands must get all the strength and energy of pure Dhamma to really work.

May Dhamma grow. May my Dhamma sons and daughters grow in Dhamma to serve others, to help others. Keep on developing your own *pāramīs* and at the same time help many to come out of misery. May Dhamma spread around the world. May more and more people come out of misery and enjoy the benefits of the Buddha-Dhamma teaching.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

MUMBAI, INDIA
JULY 20, 1997

THE TASKS AHEAD

My dear Dhamma sons and daughters:

You have gathered today with dedication and devotion to plan your work to help the spread of pure Dhamma. Twenty-eight years ago I doubted whether pure Dhamma would be accepted in this land—a land that has given rise to so many sects. However, the experience of the last twenty-eight years has shown that, even though the number is small, there are people here who have no affinity for sects and are ready to devote their energy and abilities towards the re-establishment of the pure Dhamma. Even though such people are few, their number will increase and this country and the entire world will benefit.

During the last one thousand five hundred years we have reduced our country to a pitiable state; there is only *adharma* [anti-Dhamma] in the name of Dhamma. As soon as one reduces Dhamma to a sect, people stop the actual practice and become involved only in the outward aspects, the veneer. Rituals and traditions have their own importance but they have nothing to do with real Dhamma; they are mere social necessities. Dhamma is morality; and to live a moral life one has to gain mastery over the mind, then go to the depths and purify it at the root level in order to change the mental behaviour patterns. If one does not do this, one is only fooling oneself. Human life is so precious; do not waste it.

One who is really following *sīla*, practising *samādhi*, and generating one's own *paññā* to purify one's mind has nothing to do with any sect. One may call oneself by this name or that, it makes no difference. One's goal is clear: To successfully use this human life to become proficient in *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, and to help to spread the message of Dhamma to humanity. This is the essence of Dhamma. To forget this is to forget the purpose of re-establishing Dhamma.

Keeping in mind the experience of the last twenty-eight years, let us now plan for the future. What work is to be done and how should it be done? Let us take slow but strong steps.

First, examine your *sīla, samādhi* and *paññā*, and if there are any shortcomings accept them and try to overcome them; only then will you make progress. If you refuse to accept your defects, you cannot make progress. Egotism can develop in the name of Dhamma, leading you to think, "Look, I believe in *sīla, samādhi* and *paññā* so I am a very Dhammic person." But you are only Dhammic to the extent to which you prac-

tise Dhamma. The goal of your life should be to make your Dhammic nature stronger and stronger. One who does not have this goal can never help others to develop in Dhamma. Accept your faults and work to overcome them. If somebody points out a fault in you, there is no need to feel disheartened: Check if you really have this fault; if so, the first thing you should do is to thank that person, then try to overcome the fault. If you do not have the fault you should feel compassion for the person, and think, "Poor man, perhaps he suffers from mental impurities so he can only see impurities all around him."

The many tasks we are here to assign today should be completed without inflating the ego. Don't give importance to yourself; give importance to only Dhamma. Let every server bear this in mind when considering which task to contribute towards.

One important factor to consider is how much time you can spare to serve. There may be a genuine desire to do Dhamma work but you may not have the time to devote to the task; in that case let someone else do it. Each one of you can only spare a certain amount of time; accept this fact honestly. If you take on a responsibility and cannot devote the necessary time to it, you will cause harm instead of helping.

Secondly, check whether you have the capability to complete the task. If out of overenthusiasm you volunteer for a task that is beyond your capability, you will again cause harm instead of helping.

Remember this third point now and in the future when I am not here: Nobody should be given a Dhamma task either to satisfy the ego or because of status. In social institutions someone's name can be added to a committee for such reasons, and that is all right, but not in a Dhamma institution. The work should be given only to those who ask for it humbly, knowing fully well that they have the time and the capacity to complete the task. Bear this in mind, otherwise the Dhamma will be corrupted. It does not matter if progress is slow—maybe one or two more generations will be needed to complete the task—but let the Dhamma spread in its pure form. When you work in this way, devoting whatever time and energy you can spare for the benefit of others, you begin to progress on the path and to make the best possible use of this human life.

There are many tasks ahead of us. The year 1999 is important as it is the birth centenary of Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Understand that it is not enough to hold a celebration of his centenary; we have to keep in mind Sayagyi U Ba Khin's mission in life—to spread Dhamma in its pure form. To try to fulfil that mission we must prepare a great deal.

One great task will be building the Grand Pagoda. A question now arises: Won't the Pagoda become a symbol of yet another sect? Is this not a dangerous path to tread?

There are several reasons why we should build the Grand Pagoda, and the first is to house some Buddha relics in such a way that many

can benefit by meditating near them. I know from my own experience and the experience of others that if one meditates with the relics of the Buddha, which have such strong vibrations, one progresses more easily. It is our good fortune that we have been given some of those relics. They were originally found in the *stūpa* at Sanchi, and were then kept in a London museum. A Sri Lankan who visited that museum requested the British to return the relics to their proper home and the British government assented.

Before the Buddha attained *parinibbāṇa*, Ānanda asked him, "Master, what should we do with your body?" The Buddha replied, "Just as all bodies are burnt you may burn this body too. You may keep the bones that remain after cremation inside a *stūpa* in any large city. Those of you who meditate may do so beside them; those who do not know how to meditate will come and bow to them out of reverence." These were among the last words of the Buddha.

When the relics were sent to England, it was a great loss for our country. They should be kept with great respect in a place where students can meditate and non-meditators can at least express their devotion and gratitude to this great man who gave us this pure path. The relics will be kept in this Grand Pagoda, and a hall will be built where 10,000 people can sit and meditate at one time.

There is another reason for this *stūpa*: In the last 1,500 years, mostly because of ignorance and also for some selfish reasons, the Buddha has been defamed within India. The original words of the Buddha were lost, and the Buddha was described as the incarnation of a Hindu god who possessed both good and bad qualities. The Buddha was supposed to have arisen out of the bad qualities, and all his teachings were considered bad.

Our aim with the Grand Pagoda is to present the Buddha's teaching in its pure form, and to give some information about the type of person he was. A gallery will be built in the *stūpa* where the important events of his life and the salient facts of his teaching will be depicted. Only this and nothing else will be shown. Thousands of people will be attracted to this large monument, and as they pass through the gallery some will be inspired to take a Vipassana course. If even ten people out of 10,000 visitors take a course, those ten will benefit, and the others will at least learn of his teaching.

It must be remembered in the future that the Pagoda should never be used for any sectarian work. No priest will be allowed to officiate there. Nobody should be allowed to earn any money from it; otherwise a great sin will be committed and all those who help in committing such a sin will share the fruit of that great sin. Meditators may go there for the purpose of meditating; others may go there to learn about the Buddha and his teaching. Apart from this, nothing else will be allowed; no sect will be allowed to form.

There is yet another reason for the *stūpa*: Vipassana is now slowly spreading in the countries where people call themselves Buddhists but where the practice of Vipassana has been

lost. This *stūpa* will play a major role in helping Vipassana to spread to these countries. Just as the devotees of the Buddha visit Gaya, Sarnath, and other places in India, so they will come to the Grand Pagoda to pay respects to the relics of the Buddha. They will arrive as pilgrims and will be awakened here. They will learn for themselves what the real message of the Buddha was: They do not become his followers just by bowing to a statue of him, or by lighting some lamps for him. Slowly these people will begin to realize that to really follow the Buddha they have to awaken their own *paññā*. Inspired by this Grand Pagoda, many will start to walk on the Dhamma path, and they will inspire the others to also follow this path.

Building the Grand Pagoda is a huge task, and it will certainly cost a great deal. I feel the financing should be a global project, and non-meditators from India and the rest of the world can contribute to it. As far as the Vipassana centres are concerned, they will continue to accept only money donated by Vipassana students. Let this rule always be remembered in the future: Donations for Vipassana centres and non-centre courses may be made with a pure mind only by old students; only then will Dhamma remain pure and spread. But anybody can donate for activities to inform people about Vipassana such as the CD-ROM project, the publication of the *Tipiṭaka* and the Grand Pagoda.

But it is indeed a great task. Even if the money can be collected, organizing the construction will be difficult. Even when we build a small centre we have to face many problems, and people have to devote much time to it; and this is a huge project. Many people will have to be dedicated and contribute their time.

Once the Grand Pagoda is standing, we must invite scholars from communities all over the world to visit so they can receive the message of this pure path. We will have to receive them graciously, and that will be a further responsibility for us.

During the last twenty-eight years, people around the world have been accepting the practical aspect of the teaching, now it is time to throw light on the theoretical aspects. In 1985 the Vipassana Research Institute was set up with the objective of spreading the theoretical aspects of Buddha's teaching in its pure form to all mankind, and the result was that all the teachings are now being published in various volumes and they are also available on a CD-ROM disk. Similarly, translations into other languages will be presented in their pure form. Previous translations have been corrupted either deliberately or by oversight—one cannot say—but soon these correct translations will be available. All this is a major enterprise.

Of course there will be opposition, I expect that; but we should learn to face it without fear, with *mettā* and compassion. We will continue to practise and to teach Dhamma in its pure form; we will not allow it to be corrupted. Dhamma belongs to everyone; it is not limited to any particular sect. The theoretical aspect of Vipassana should spread amongst all mankind, and for this purpose there should be a seminar in India to which Pāli scholars from around the world are invited so that they can see for themselves the pure teaching of the Buddha. An-

other task is to publish more Dhamma books to ensure that more people have the opportunity to practice true *samādhi*.

Another important task I wish to see completed in the next two years is the building of facilities at all the places where land has been purchased for a centre, even if only for a small number of students. This is especially important at places like Bodhagayā, Sārnāth, Kuśhīnagar and Lumbini, which have very strong Dhamma vibrations. People might have sat a number of courses at other places, yet they will benefit so much more from one course at one of these places. People should have the opportunity to benefit from meditating there. Visitors from around the world go to those places on pilgrimage and feel that they have done a great Dhamma act, but if they have the opportunity to meditate there and take advantage of the vibrations left by the Buddha they would benefit enormously.

The year 1999 is important because it will be the birth centenary of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, the thirtieth anniversary of the return of this teaching to India. Also, we will be preparing to start the next millennium with Dhamma, keeping in mind the mistakes that have been made in the last thousand years. We have to ensure that Dhamma is kept in its pure form in the new millennium and does not become another sect; otherwise it will be lost. How can we ensure that Dhamma remains pure? Let people call themselves by any name, be it Hindu, Christian, Jain, Muslim or Buddhist, as long as they follow *sīla, samādhi* and *paññā*. In the next century, let Dhamma spread in the entire world and let all those religions also remain.

My *mettā* is with you, but the work has to be done by you. I am now an old man, how much can I do? You may consult me; I will give you *mettā*; the rest is up to you. Form a committee for each task and, as I said, before volunteering for any task two criteria should be considered: Let every person come forward of one's own volition according to one's capacity and the amount of time one can spare.

I suggest that each committee have one head and three or four others to help. Work with the understanding that you are only the medium and that Dhamma will do the work. We have to make efforts and then Dhamma will definitely help us. It has done so until now, and so much has been achieved, and it will continue to do so in the future. These tasks will benefit many, and whatever efforts you make will increase your own Dhamma strength.

We are all householders, we have to look after our dependants and ourselves. But is it enough just to care for our families, to earn a name in society? Is this the only purpose of human life? We should also think how we could best serve others so that they really benefit, and then one will spend this human life really usefully.

May all the Dhamma sons and daughters here today progress in Dhamma and become a shining example for others. May you all benefit, and help others to benefit.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 8, 1998
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (ON CHILDREN'S COURSES)

Questioner: What are the guidelines regarding teaching *sīla* and the origins of the technique, while teaching Anapana in schools in the West? For example introducing Buddha without the school system's thinking of it as a religion.

Goenkaji: Well, first this person who is teaching must be fully convinced that this is not a religion. Buddha was not a religious teacher, he was not the founder of a religion. Buddha taught a way of life. If you are fully convinced of this, you can convince others. When you talk of the law of gravity you have to use the name of Newton. But you do not become a member of Newton's sect. You must first understand what you are teaching, then it becomes very easy to explain it to people—whether children or adults.

And what about *sīla*?

Well, you must explain *sīla* to them. *Sīla* is important. There is nothing wrong in this. ❧

Should the junior assistant teachers be responsible for conducting the *mettā* sessions at 9 p.m. with the servers in the same way as the AT conducts these sessions on a 10-day course?

No. How did that start? That is not a part of the children's course. I have been getting information from many places that when we name somebody a junior assistant teacher the word "junior" gets lost, and the word "assistant" is also lost. They think, "Now I am a teacher, I must get all the respect and status that a teacher gets. I must have a high seat to sit on. I can now give *mettā*. Let all sit before me." That is why we will now change this name of junior assistant teacher to children's course teacher.

In some cases this person may have only taken one or two courses. Sometimes I make such a person a children's course teacher because this person is capable of handling children.

But such a person does not know anything about the details of Vipassana. Then they start behaving as if they are a big teacher and can give *mettā* in the evening. Was there any *mettā* session in the children's course that we taught? No, there was not. It should not be done. I think you all must inform your children's course teachers: Don't act like an assistant teacher—you are a children's course teacher. You should only do whatever is asked of you, never do more. ❧

How can children be encouraged to practise at home if their families do not meditate? Can they attend Vipassana group sittings?

The Vipassana adult group sitting? No. A child should never be brought to the adult group sit-

ting. During the one-hour group sitting the child will get bored within 10 or 15 minutes. Then what will he or she do? The child will develop aversion towards meditation. No. A child should never be brought. If there is a group sitting for children only, then it is all right. That will be only for 10 or 15 minutes, or a maximum of 20 minutes. ❧

Should the Dhamma seat be used by the children's course teacher at a centre?

Why would a children's course teacher want to sit on the high seat where the assistant teacher sits to give a course, or where a teacher sits? That madness should be taken away. Sit on a cushion, or at most, a low *chauki*, that's all. Don't allow these children's course teachers to sit on the Dhamma seat and start giving guidance. Everyone must understand, "This is my duty, and I am doing this duty to help others, not to increase my ego or pride." Otherwise one is not fit even to give children's courses. ❧

CONCLUDING MESSAGE ON CHILDREN'S COURSES

These children's courses are very important because this is the time when you can give them proper guidance to help them live a good Dhamma life. One thing should be very clear in the mind of the children's course teachers: We are not at all interested in converting somebody from one organized religion to another. We are, of course, against any kind of sectarian grouping because that is so harmful to society. This is very evident.

We are giving a seed that helps you to understand that instead of living a life of sectarianism, well look, you can live a life of Dhamma which is so pure. Living a life of morality, a life where you control your mind, a life where you purify your mind— nobody can object to that.

So whoever is teaching must be fully convinced that what they teach will not convert people to any religion. The most unwholesome action of any Vipassana teacher, either junior or senior, would be to try to bring people to a particular sect. That would mean that we have totally lost our goal. Our aim is to take people out of communalism, sectarianism, all the narrow-mindedness where people start fighting with one another—take them out of that and give them this broad truth of Dhamma which is for everybody, which is universal.

If the one who is teaching does not understand this, then this person should not start teaching. Take more courses, come and discuss with me, with other senior teachers, and get rid of this wrong view.

Your thinking should be, "I am here to help people so that they live a better life, good for them, good for the society." Then you can easily answer any question that comes from their parents or teachers. However, it is important to mention Buddha because in Dhamma gratitude is an important aspect of development.

We give the seed of pure Dhamma to these boys and girls and after 15 or 20 years the new generation that comes up will have responsibility towards their family, towards society, the country, the world, towards humanity. They should grow up to be ideal human beings. This is our only aim.

If one who is teaching is very firm and is convinced that what he or she is teaching is perfectly good for everyone, then it becomes easy to explain to others. If one is not sure whether the whole mission is to convert people to Buddhism or something else, then better not be a teacher. Don't take that responsibility.

People practise yoga *āsanas* or *prāṇāyāma*; this does not mean they get converted to this religion or that religion. They are practising it to be healthy. Now here is a technique which helps one to live a healthy mental life. It is a mental exercise to make the mind healthy.

This should be very clear to everybody. See that more and more children's courses are given, and more and more children get the seed of Dhamma, so that the next generation grows up to be an ideal generation. This is going to happen.

You should feel very fortunate that you are able to take part in this mission and develop your own *pāramīs*. The Dhamma is bound to spread whether or not we join. Join in this good cause, which is good for others and for oneself. May there be more and more children's courses. May the next generation grow up an ideal generation around the whole world.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 10, 1998
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: Guruji, how do you select your trustees, assistant teachers and teachers from among the meditators?

Goenkaji: Ask me how I don't select them. What are the reasons for not selecting somebody as an assistant teacher, trustee or other position?

You see, this is more or less a new tradition—the responsibility has fallen on me to start a new tradition of householder teachers of Vipassana.

We are very grateful to Venerable Ledi Sayadaw who, a hundred years back, was the first person who broke the barrier. Before that Vipassana was limited only to the *bhikkhus*. He said, "Why only *bhikkhus*? Even lay people must also learn Vipassana." And he started teaching householders. Then he opened another gate for the householders—there must be householder teachers also. He appointed the first lay teacher of Vipassana—Saya Thetgyi. That was a big opening, because he saw the future very well. Now 2,500 years are going to be completed, and the next *Buddha-sāsana* [period of time in which the teaching of the Buddha is available] is going to start.

In countries where the people are followers of Buddha—or at least they call themselves Buddhist—and a *bhikkhu* sits on the Dhamma seat, they are very happy, they will accept everything that he says and follow him. But in so-called non-Buddhist countries, if a *bhikkhu* goes there and says, "Well, come to me, I will teach you Dhamma," nobody will come, they will all run away. They will think, "Oh, he has come to convert us from our organized religion to his organized religion." But if a layman teaches, that problem goes away. And the layman has to be very careful to make it clear that certainly we are not interested in converting people from one religion to another. So that is one reason why this tradition of lay teachers has started—because Ledi Sayadaw foresaw this need.

During Sayagyi U Ba Khin's time there were very few students, and now the numbers are growing. So the tradition which is starting now must begin in a proper way. Any mistake that happens today will worsen as the generations pass. As far as my wisdom allows, as far as my intellect allows, I have to see that the beginning should be in a very pure way.

What is a pure way? Dhamma is so pure. The moment I come to know that some person has indicated that he or she wishes to be an assistant teacher, I feel very sorry for this person, but I have to draw a line—this person is not fit to be an assistant teacher. Somebody tries to indicate, "Well, if I become a trustee, it will be so good; I can do this, I can do this," they are blacklisted. Somebody gives me an indication that he wants to become a president or general secretary of a certain Vipassana organization—blacklisted.

However close this person may be to me, I don't care, because this person has not ripened in Dhamma. He or she wants the position, the power, the status, which is more important for this person than serving. But suppose somebody comes to me and says, "I can serve in any way, but I want to serve. Look, I have so much time, please tell me which way to serve." If so, I start giving good marks. And when I find he or she is really doing selfless service without expecting any position, power, status, etc., then slowly this person is chosen.

Somebody may be chosen and later on I find they are developing more and more ego, they are becoming arrogant in dealing with people, generating nothing but aversion and hatred, harming themselves. I feel very compassionate towards this person, "Look, I am responsible for this person's generating impurities. If I had not placed him or her in this high position, this person would not have generated this kind of ego, would not have used aggressive words, and would not have harmed people." It is better then to wait.

I can't take the teachership away from that person, but I will take him or her away from that particular job and give another job. And I explain, "Well, this is your mistake. When you come out of it you will get a more important job—more important in the sense that you get more opportunities to serve more people, to help them develop in Dhamma." This becomes a big responsibility of a Dhamma teacher who wants to start a tradition of householders.

Also, when I notice that assistant teachers or trustees—people who have been given a responsible task—are intentionally or unintentionally forming a group with the thought, "This is a member of my group and I'd better support the person who is in my group, I'd better try to bring down the person who is not in my group"—then I realize these people have no Dhamma at all. Such things are all right in a political party, in all sorts of social organizations, but not in a pure Dhamma organization. The moment that starts, it becomes my duty to see that it is stopped here and now. Break these groups and don't allow people to create this kind of situation.

This is not just for me, but also for the future principal teachers, so they have guidance on an ideal way of running Dhamma centres and Dhamma management. These points should be set now. So for this reason, even if I have made a mistake I will try to rectify it.

As I said, we cannot remove an assistant teacher because anybody who sits on the Dhamma seat and teaches Dhamma develops a rapport with their students. I don't want to break that rapport. So that continues—unless it becomes totally unavoidable. In such a case, of course, I have to tell this person, "No, you are no longer an assistant teacher." This is very rare. It has happened, but it is very rare.

But when it comes to trustees, management, etc., then certainly I would like to keep changing them. In a trust, every year they have to resign, and I may appoint somebody else, I may re-appoint some of them. Why? Not because there is anything wrong with them. But the trouble is, somebody in the same post for a long time may unintentionally, unconsciously, develop a kind of attachment, "I am the general secretary, nobody else can do this job. I am so perfect in it, I must continue. If I don't continue the whole thing will collapse." What has hap-

pened? What is he doing? He starts feeling that he is indispensable. This is not Dhamma. So every year, change. Another reason is that more people should get opportunity to develop their *pāramīs*, more people should come into the fold of serving people, serving the students.

Whenever I ask a trustee, a president or a secretary to resign, from that moment his period of testing starts. I ask myself, "Now how he is serving? When this person was president he was serving with so much enthusiasm and working so hard. Now he's no longer president or general secretary, what happens?" If I find that this person has lost all interest in Dhamma work, then he had been interested in the post to increase his own ego, and it had nothing to do with service. So I have compassion for this person and try to explain, try to bring him back to Dhamma. This is the job of a principal Dhamma teacher, to see that his Dhamma sons and daughters keep growing in Dhamma. It is very important. All these things happen and one observes.

Another thing that has to be kept in mind is: This is now a tradition of lay teachers. At the time of Buddha there were householder teachers, but then later on only *bhikkhus* taught. When a *bhikkhu* lives according to the *vinaya* there is nothing wrong because he won't accumulate wealth. He can't accumulate wealth, only his needs are taken care of. If I see that a *bhikkhu* teacher does not keep himself governed according to the *vinaya*, he breaks *vinaya*, he is there just to accumulate money or this or that, then I realize he is not fit for that position. Well, that is a problem concerning *bhikkhu* teachers. But my concern is about lay teachers. I have to start a very healthy, wholesome tradition for the householder teachers; I have to be very careful. Say somebody is made a teacher—assistant or senior or whatever it is—and he or she has no means of livelihood. As a householder this person has certain family responsibilities but no means of livelihood. Then possibly, because of this situation, he or she may start spreading the hands, "I want something. Look, my son, my daughter is sick, my son or daughter is going to be married, I have this or that family problem." And students, out of sympathy or respect for the teacher, may start giving donations. If this ever happens the whole tradition will get spoiled.

So I have to examine whether this person whom I am going to appoint has at least the necessary income to maintain the family. If so, then it is perfectly all right. When I find this person has no means of livelihood, then however perfect he or she may be as a teacher, I don't appoint them. It may look as if I am prejudiced against people who are poor, but actually if one becomes a teacher when one cannot support one's family it would be very harmful to the tradition.

We are facing these problems now and trying to solve them in the best Dhamma way, to set an ideal for future generations to follow. With everything that is done, always keep in mind that the purity of Dhamma should not get spoiled. People should not make it a means of livelihood—that would be very dangerous. People should not take up service to increase their ego or pride, and then become haughty and start talking roughly with others. All this is for the benefit of responsible future principal teachers, because this is going to spread. We are seeing this happening now, and within one or two generations it will spread throughout the world.

If proper guidelines for this tradition are not made now, if proper principles are not laid down, it will be very harmful in the long run. This is the *vinaya* of the householder teachers. As different situations arise, more rules may come. Even at the time of Buddha, he made certain *vinaya* rules and then something happened requiring one more. And then something else happened requiring one more. In the same way, with experience, we have to keep on adding rules, changing rules, because this is as it is. But the whole aim is to keep the Dhamma mission totally pure. Nothing should go wrong. This is the only way by which I appoint people. ❧

Guruji, there is an apprehension that the pagoda now being constructed at Mumbai may turn Vipassana into another sect.

Yes, yes. Well, if this teacher has at least a few more years of life you will see that he will not allow anything we do to turn to sectarianism. If the pagoda becomes a tool for making Buddha's teaching a sect, an organized religion, then all our teaching has gone to mud—we have not understood what Buddha's teaching is. If this pagoda is used for people who come and pray, "Oh pagoda, please give me this, I need this," then the whole thing will become an organized religion, certainly.

How are we going to use the pagoda? It will be used in the proper way: For meditation and for the spread of Vipassana, so people learn what Vipassana is. Many people will come just out of curiosity wondering, "Such a magnificent building, what is inside it?" And when they go inside they will get some information, "Well look, this was the Buddha, this is what he taught, these things happened in his life, Vipassana made him a Buddha, and Vipassana made him a good Dhamma teacher for the whole world." People will get so much benefit.

If they get the inspiration to enquire about Vipassana, we will give information. Out of say 10,000 people who come, if even 100 get inspired to take a course, well 100 benefit and at least the rest get the right message. So we will see that this pagoda is not allowed to develop into another sect. Otherwise our purpose will be lost. ❧

The year 1999 is the birth centenary of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, and also your 75th birthday. How should we celebrate this important year?

Forget that 75th birthday, I am still alive! Give more importance to the centenary year. Wonderful, the centenary year of a real saint of this era! We must all keep thinking what the proper way to celebrate this is. One may think that we must write articles and books, and praise him saying, "What a wonderful saint he was." But that won't help. How can more and more people get attracted to Vipassana, or at least come to know what it is, so that then they will get attracted to it? That is more important.

History will say what a wonderful person he was. History will say Ledi Sayadaw was a wonderful person because he was the first person who opened gates for householders, and he made Saya Thetgyi the first lay teacher. Then came Sayagyi U Ba Khin, and he opened the gates to Vipassana for the whole world, telling his students, "Go and teach. Teach like this…

like this." The entire world will feel so grateful to him. So the best thing now is that we give the greatest amount of information to make people aware of Vipassana. For this reason the pagoda is being built. ❧

Are new editions of the CD-ROM being planned? And does this have any relevance to *paṭipatti*?

Well, the first work is completed and I congratulate all those people who worked on this. This is not final, other versions will come out. But one point should be very clear with all those who are working on the project: For us the propagation of *pariyatti* is not the final aim. For us *paṭipatti* is the aim. *Pariyatti* will help.

Why have we collected all these scriptures? Because many books, many old scriptures were lost in China, Tibet and other countries. Who knows if more will get lost? If I look at a Pāli book printed about a 100 years back in Burma, many of the books listed in the references are no longer available. Within these 100 years so many books have been lost. Before more get lost, it is my duty to keep them alive by putting them on CD-ROM.

Now we have three scripts on CD-ROM and two more scripts will be added, and quite possibly four or five more. In all it might be six, seven, we cannot say. But when another two scripts and some more volumes are included—which may be completed in a few months—we will put it on the Internet and make it open for discussion.

What is the main purpose of that? Now Dhamma Giri is a world centre for *paṭipatti* and the Internet will be used by this centre for discussion on all aspects of *paṭipatti*. So we will start a sort of discussion on the Internet. We will put forward an item, and say, "We feel that bodily sensation is very important in the teaching of Buddha." People will respond, "No, no. The word *'vedanā'* means 'feeling', the 'feeling' means 'mind'." Let it come, let communication start in that way. If we are making a mistake, we don't feel shy to rectify it. But if others have gone wrong somewhere, then at least they will learn what is the correct translation of what the Buddha said.

This is only one example. There can be so many things like this that we can discuss. For instance, there is the question, what is *'sampajañña'*? Even the *Aṭṭhakathās* sometimes might have not have given the proper answer. For us, when there is a difference between *Aṭṭhakathā* and the Tipiṭaka, Tipiṭaka is more important. Instead of Buddhaghosa I go to Buddha, "What do you say, sir? How should I understand this?"—not to Buddhaghosa. If the *Aṭṭhakathās* give a clear explanation, it is perfectly all right. But if the explanation is not clear, for me Buddha is more authentic. So all those things will come up now, with this international discussion which will start in a few months' time as soon as we put it on the Internet.

Now a wonderful thing has arisen because of this CD-ROM—here is one example: When I came to this country to fulfil my teacher's wish that Vipassana should get established in India and then spread around the world, the first thing that came in my mind was, "I have come here to teach Buddha's teaching as Dhamma, not as Buddhism. The moment I say I have come here to teach Buddhism, nobody will even listen to me, let alone spend ten days with me to learn it." But this was not strategy for

me—it was my conviction, because Buddha was so very much against sectarianism.

After so many years, the CD-ROM came out and I asked somebody who was working on it, "Please look for the word *'Bauddha'*—that means Buddhist or Buddhism—is it written anywhere?" There are 146 volumes, more than 55,000 pages, millions of words—but not a single *'Bauddha'* is there. "Buddhism" is never used anywhere—neither in *Aṭṭhakathā*, Tipiṭaka nor *Ṭīkā*—nowhere is this word found. Not at all. I was so happy.

How did the teaching of Buddha deteriorate? Now we have to investigate how this word *Bauddha* started. Who first used this word? To me—I am very frank—whoever first used the word Buddhism or Buddhist, in any language, was the biggest enemy of Buddha's teaching. Because the teaching had been universal, and now out of ignorance, he made it sectarian. Buddhism is only for Buddhists but Dhamma is for all. The moment you say Buddhism, then you are making Buddha's teaching limited to a certain group of people, which is totally wrong.

So we will make inquiries and discuss these things with people on the Internet. We will give information to people and if they have any other information, we'll be able to get this from them. This centre here will become important for the discussion of Buddha's teaching pertaining to Vipassana. If anything comes which is pertaining to any kind of philosophical arguments, we will say, "No, no, thank you. We don't discuss that. We will discuss only things which will support the work of Vipassana." ❧

Many old students are teaching Anapana on their own, and some are even teaching Vipassana. Is it proper?

It is not proper, but what can we do? We don't have any lawyer keeping control to say, "This is registered by Goenka and is his monopoly, this is his trademark." Nothing like that. And it should not be like that. Why? Because it is open for everybody.

But of course, we say that if you feel like spreading this to others, first get established in Dhamma yourself, and then get proper training as to how to teach. Get a proper training and then yes, teach. In spite of that, if somebody doesn't agree, all right, be happy. What can we do? We won't take any legal action, that is true. ❧

In your discourses you talk about 31 *lokas* but often this looks very speculative. Can this be understood at the level of sensations?

Certainly. The whole technique takes you to that stage where you will start feeling—some students, very few, but some have started feeling—"Now what sort of vibration am I experiencing?" And they understand a vibration of this particular *loka* is of this type, a vibration of that *loka* is of that type. And later on they can also go in much more detail.

But it is not necessary that one should first accept the reality of these 31 planes and only then will one progress in Dhamma. Nothing doing. People come to me from different traditions—there are traditions where they don't believe in a past or future life. All right. Then I say,

"Do you believe in this life? Yes. All right, work to improve this life. Later on, when you reach a stage where you can understand what a past or future life is—by experience—then accept it, not now." ❧

If one is given the opportunity to serve by doing some work which is against one's nature, for example a person who likes to work with people is asked to work on a computer, is it wise to accept this work?

This is a problem for the management. No work should be imposed on anybody. People come here to give service. And suppose this person is not competent to do some particular work and you say, "No, you must only do this work." Then you are putting a barrier for the progress of this person. You are putting a barrier for the progress of the whole centre. This should never be done. But the management has to take care of this.

Of course nothing should be imposed on a Dhamma server. At the same time, the management has to be very careful. Suppose somebody comes here and says, "I will live here for six months or one year, but look, I can't do this or this. I can't do any service. I am here just to meditate twice a day and then the rest of the time I will gossip here, talk there and rest. After six months I will go away." No. Then this person has started harming himself or herself and also has started harming the centre. So we have to be very careful about this. But that does not mean that we impose work on somebody which one cannot do at all. ❧

Guruji, we have heard that you have agreed to be the chief guest at the unveiling of the statue of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar [a well-known political leader responsible for the mass conversion of people from the untouchable caste into Buddhism, known later in India as neo-Buddhism] in Mumbai. We have an apprehension that this might give a signal that you are supporting a sectarian organization. Kindly clarify.

Well, if somebody calls me to be chief guest, how can I say, "Don't make me a chief guest, make me a third-class guest?" All right, as chief guest I will sit there. But whatever I say there will be nothing which goes against pure Dhamma. I have great respect for Ambedkar because this was one person who achieved so much. For so many generations my forefathers and all the upper-class people have suppressed these people. What a great injustice has been done to them. I have all sympathy for them and I want them to develop in Dhamma.

But at the same time, what is pure Dhamma? They have not understood. So it is my duty to explain to them that this is pure Dhamma. So I made a condition, "If you invite me I will talk about Vipassana, nothing but Vipassana." And they said, "Wonderful. Speak only about Vipassana. We are inviting you for that purpose, so that people will know what Vipassana is, what the real teaching of Buddha is." All those people have been suppressed for generations. Babasaheb did a very good thing when he took them out of the caste system and gave them at least self-respect. But then the real teaching of Buddha is missing. If that also goes to them, wonderful. So I will play my role to bring the pure Dhamma to them. ❧

Is it not a violation of one of the eight precepts when an AT wears jewellery or impressive garments on the Dhamma seat?

Well, the ATs have not taken eight precepts, they are on five precepts. When the AT sits his own course, then he or she must be on eight precepts. Otherwise, assistant teachers can't be on eight precepts all the time because they keep on giving courses here and there. That means they must live on eight precepts the whole life—no. The old students who are taking that course have to work according to the eight precepts, but the teacher, of course, must be very perfect in five precepts. ❧

Is having children a possible hindrance to progress in Dhamma?

Why a hindrance? Look after your children with Dhamma. You get a wonderful opportunity to give *mettā* to your children, and that will help you to give *mettā* to the whole world. It is not a hindrance. Mother Visākhā had twenty children, and still she developed so much. That doesn't mean you should not have any family planning, but even with children you can progress in Dhamma. ❧

I don't like to see non-meditators divorce, but I find it especially disturbing when I see an established Dhamma couple in the West separate. Can you give us your advice?

It is certainly disturbing—to everybody, whether in the West or the East. You see, when you make a commitment with somebody, and you keep the door open—well, any time the male can run away or the female can run out—this is not an ideal family life. What about the children? They wonder, "Now whom shall I call my mother? Whom shall I call my father?" When I read the student forms when I was conducting courses, and saw somebody had written "three parents" I felt so sad for this person. That means this person never had the love of the mother or of father—they have gone away with somebody else.

So this is definitely anti-Dhamma, we are not going to encourage that. But it happens. Slowly we have to try to change. To me, this is the biggest curse of Western culture now. But at the same time, it should not be so rigid that one is bound and cannot separate if a particular situation has come about. If you separate, then you take the vow, "I will not marry again. I have tried married life, finished. Now I will live the life of celibacy." Wonderful. Then divorce is allowed. ❧

Could you give some advice to mothers with infants who are struggling to keep up their practice and who are distressed by the fact that they can't do so?

Why can't they do so? The child is on the lap and still you can practise. You can give *mettā* to the child, you can give *mettā* to others. You must learn in every situation how you can carry on practising your Dhamma. Use Dhamma for all your duties. A mother's duty is to look after the child. Do this in a Dhamma way. This will help. ❧

I have heard students wonder why teachers and ATs dine separately and are given very congenial accommodation during courses.

Why are they given congenial accommodation? Understand, we can't provide congenial facilities for every student. A student comes for ten days only, but the teacher has to live there for months, or years, and if you don't give the necessary facilities, then how can he or she teach properly? So it is not a luxury, but a necessity. We have to provide certain facilities for them, more than what is given to the students. ❧

Kindly explain again why you say that self-sex is a breakage of *sīla*.

Well, I don't say that self-sex is breaking *sīla*, but it leads you towards breaking of *sīla*. It means you have become a slave of your passion—if you don't get anything else, then you start using self-sex. That will take you further on the wrong path. So we try to take people out from this and out of passion. That is the aim of Vipassana. ❧

How does one find the balance between selfless service and taking care of oneself?

[Laughs] If one cannot take care of oneself, what service will one give? First take care of yourself, and then start giving selfless service. ❧

In the teaching of Vipassana, in the theoretical aspect, there are many things which don't seem appropriate. For example, there is the mention of innumerable lives of the Enlightened One and his supernormal powers. Is it necessary to accept all this before getting the benefits of Vipassana?

It is not necessary. As I said just now, people come here who don't believe in past or future lives, and still they progress. People need not accept it. But as a responsible teacher, with whatever experience and understanding I have, I have to place before them the facts as they are. I cannot say just to please people, "Oh no, there is no past life, there is no future life, there is nothing." Then I would be misleading people. So I have to be very careful. People may or may not accept, it is not my problem. ❧

When you get a birth in *deva* realms, are you born to *deva* parents in the human way?

When I get such a birth I will come and tell you. Why now? [Laughs] ❧

Why did the Buddha hesitate initially to ordain females?

Ask Buddha, not me. But you must understand the situation of that time. You see, there was no security at all. Even business people going from one city to the other had to pass through jungles where there were only *dacoits* [bandits] and other dangers. And we see so many cases of rape happening—even of those who had taken vows and become nuns—not only in the Buddha's tradition, but in other traditions also. So naturally he advised that in such a situation you practise the same thing living at home. And he taught all his own family members while

they lived at home. They became *sotāpanna*, and from *sotāpanna* the father became an *arahant*. Although the progress is slower, you can continue. But when they insisted, and Ānanda also insisted, then he had to agree to that. But that was the main reason. Nothing else.

Even now, in most of the countries, women are not allowed in the *Sangha*.

What can I do if the *Sangha* is lost there? If the *Bhikkhunī Sangha* is lost, who will start it? There is a tradition that says five *bhikkhus* should be together to initiate somebody as a *bhikkhu*. Similarly five *bhikkhunīs* are needed to iniate a *bhikkhunī*. If there are no *bhikkhunīs* at all, what can be done? This is not my responsibility. My responsibility is to teach Dhamma. Whether someone is a *bhikkhunī* or a laywoman, it makes no difference to me, I teach them. ❧

Do we have any control over finding a Dhamma partner, or is it all kamma?

If so, you might say, "It is all kamma. Why should I work for my food? Now it is breakfast time. Well my kamma, bring me my breakfast!" Is it possible? One has to work, but work in a proper way. Don't start running after everybody looking for a partner. That is not the way. Work for it in a proper, balanced way. ❧

DHAMMA SIKHARA, INDIA
MARCH 22, 1998
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: What is the most important quality needed while serving the Dhamma?

Goenkaji: If you don't have *mettā*, it is better that you don't give Dhamma service. Sometimes a Dhamma server shouts like a policeman or a policewoman at students who do not observe the rules, and this is totally wrong. Every Dhamma server is actually a representative of the Dhamma; students watch their behaviour and if they are just as arrogant as others, the students will lose confidence in the Dhamma.

Therefore Dhamma service is a great responsibility. If someone cannot work with *mettā* in a humble way, it is better to refrain from taking this responsibility. ❧

Please elaborate on why daily sittings are important.

You are Vipassana meditators and you don't sit daily? What sort of meditators are you? [laughter] Take more courses! ❧

Why is abstaining from sexual misconduct and intoxicants so important for a Dhamma server?

They are important in order to progress in Dhamma. All the *sīlas* are important for a Dhamma server, but these two are the most important.

If you keep taking any intoxicant you will remain a slave to intoxication, and you cannot progress in Dhamma; the mind cannot be balanced when it is enslaved. You must become your own master, and intoxication cannot make you your own master.

Similarly for sexual misconduct: By practising Dhamma, both husband and wife will ultimately reach the stage where they naturally live a life of celibacy. But if there is a connection with more than one person, sexual desire will continue to increase. It is like adding petrol to a fire that you hope to put out.

So the first discipline is that a sexual relationship should only exist between spouses, nowhere else. If both are good Vipassana meditators, when passion arises they observe the sensations arising and accept the fact, "There is passion in my mind." As they observe the sensations they will probably come out of passion. But if they don't and have bodily relations, there is nothing wrong because they have not broken their *sīla*. I have seen many cases where, if they keep working like this, people easily come out of passion and still feel so contented, so happy. The need does not arise. A sexual relationship is actually designed by nature for reproduction, but it is human beings' weakness to go against nature and use it only for passion.

Slowly, if you keep working with Vipassana, you will come out of passion and reach a stage where there is a natural celibacy—a celibacy

achieved through suppression doesn't help—and this natural celibacy will help you to develop so much in Dhamma. You progress by leaps and bounds once you reach that stage. ❧

How should a Dhamma server deal with conflicts that arise with other servers?

In a Dhamma way! If there is conflict and you start quarrelling and creating a negative atmosphere in the Dhamma centre, it is unwholesome. If there is any difference of opinion between servers, resolve it with *mettā* towards each other, don't quarrel about it. If you can't sort it out, go to your elders (whoever is available) and discuss the situation with them. They will give you some guidance.

It is unwholesome to stay at a Dhamma centre and generate negativity. If you generate negativity at your home it is harmful enough, but there the harm is limited to your family members. At a centre *mettā* vibrations create a positive atmosphere and if you pollute it with any kind of negativity you will harm so many people who come here to take advantage of Dhamma.

If you find you are becoming negative it is better to retire for some time. Meditate, come out of negativity, and then start serving once again. ❧

What are the benefits of bowing down to pay respect?

In the eyes of most people when you bow down to somebody you pay respect to that person, and that is all there is to it. Actually, this [the top of the head] is the receiving part of the body, and it receives good or bad vibrations. For a Vipassana meditator it is really worthwhile keeping the attention here and bowing down to somebody who is giving *mettā* or generating Dhamma vibrations.

I remember my teacher instructed us how to bow down: The first time should be with awareness of sensations here [at the top of the head] and understanding *anicca*, the second time should be understanding *dukkha*, and the third time should understanding *anattā*. At times when we bowed down, he would ask, "Did you bow down properly?"

When you are observing *anicca* in this area you understand, "Look, everything is changing." When you observe *dukkha* you understand, "Whatever is changing is a source of *dukkha*, it can't be a source of happiness." With *anattā* you understand, "There is no 'I' in this, no 'mine', it is just a mind-matter phenomenon." So the way to bow down is with understanding and awareness of sensations at the top of the head. ❧

Can you explain how the four formalities at the beginning of a course have practical benefit and are not simply a ritual?

I explain this every time the course is given. When you take refuge in the Triple Gem it is not a ritual; you are taking refuge in the qualities of the Triple Gem with the intention of developing those qualities in yourself. If you don't have that intention and you merely recite the refuge, of course it will only be a ritual.

Similarly when you take the Five Precepts you should do so with the intention that you will observe them at least for the coming ten days. Then it is not a ritual, it is a strong decision.

When you surrender yourself, you undertake to work according to the guidance that is given to you. In fact, you surrender to the technique. There's nothing wrong in surrendering if you do so with this understanding.

Lastly there is the request of Dhamma. There is a healthy tradition that Dhamma should not be imposed on anybody; it can only be given to somebody who requests it. When you request the Teacher to give you Dhamma, it also signifies that you understand that the Teacher is giving something and that you are receptive to this, you are ready to learn.

These formalities are not rituals, the meaning behind them is clear. Their purpose is explained every time that Anapana is given. ❧

What is the role of the *ācariya* [teacher] of a centre in preventing the burnout of long-term Dhamma servers?

Well, it is the duty of the *ācariya* to see that nobody is over-taxed. Each server must work according to his or her capacity. If the *ācariya* finds that somebody is very much fatigued by Dhamma service, he or she should give the server time to relax, to meditate, to gain strength, and only then should the server serve again. If too much work falls on the shoulders of somebody who is not capable of working at that time, it is not healthy. The *ācariya* must prevent that happening. ❧

What should I do if neither my body nor my mind is ready to practise *mettā* at the end of my daily sitting, even after relaxing?

Well, if you are not in a state to practise *mettā*, then it is better not to do *mettā*. But at least at the surface level of your mind you can think, "May all beings be happy." It won't be very powerful, but you can try to work like that. However, if the mind is very agitated it is better not to practice *mettā*.

When there are subtle vibrations and you feel peaceful and harmonious the *mettā* that you generate is very powerful; it helps the atmosphere around you, making it very positive. ❧

If our senior in Dhamma takes an independent decision which goes against the guidelines you have formulated, what should we as Dhamma servers do?

Very humbly and politely place your view before this person, saying, "Well, according to my understanding of the guidelines, this is an incorrect decision. I believe the guidelines suggest another course of action." Then your senior can explain the reasons for his or her decision. If you still find there is a difference of opinion you can say, "Since we do not agree on this matter I will write to a senior teacher or to Goenkaji. Let us explain the situation to a senior and let him or her decide." But never write to a senior without first discussing your difference of opinion with this person, otherwise it would be backbiting, a breakage of *sīla*. Be careful not to break your vocal *sīla*.

Often people write letters to me saying, "So-and-so is behaving like this. So-and-so is doing this." Then I ask whether they have discussed the matter with the person they are complaining about and they reply that they have not. In such a situation why write to me?

It is very important that you talk over the problem with the person concerned first. Most of your difficulties will be settled when you discuss the matter directly — not with a negative attitude but a positive attitude, making an effort to understand the other person's view. Maybe your view is wrong or maybe the elder's view is wrong, and when you discuss with them things will become clearer. If you find that the situation is not becoming clearer, then there is nothing wrong in informing other elders. ❧

I know that an experienced Dhamma server should treat new students and visitors with more *mettā* than old students. How can one do this?

By practising Dhamma more and more. When your mind becomes purer naturally you will have more *mettā*. In an earlier question you asked why it is important to practise daily. Understand, if you don't practise daily you will not have any *mettā*, and if you have no *mettā* you can't serve. So practise daily, make yourself strong in Dhamma, and naturally your *mettā* will become strong and have a great impact on the students who visit.

As I said, those who come to a course always look at the Dhamma servers, the teacher and all those who manage the centre. If they find these people are not practising what is being taught here, they will think that this is a sham. They will say to themselves, "Look, the technique has not helped those who practise here, why should I waste my time?"

Be very careful: Make yourself strong in Dhamma so that you can give more *mettā*. Keep the atmosphere full of *mettā*, full of *mettā*. If you do that you will be successful and the centre will be successful; more and more people will be benefited. ❧

Ramana Maharshi spoke about the belief that there is awakening without "doership." I have a question about doership, in that there are times when the effort to do does not lead towards equanimity. I feel that sometimes I long not to long, or I seek not to seek. I would like to be awake rather than in pursuit. The more I'm in pursuit, the more I seem to be moving away from my goal.

What Ramana Maharshi said was correct, but he was speaking of a higher stage. A beginner who starts on the path has to work. You are being taught to reach the stage that is without "I" (*anattā*), and when there is no "I" there is no doer. But if we say there is no "I" in the beginning, you could become confused and think you do not need to work. You must first understand, "Well, I have to take steps on the path."

A time will come when you understand, "There is a path but there is nobody to walk over it, there are only steps being taken on the path." That stage has to come naturally. If the "I" is still there in you and you try to impose a feeling that the "I" is not there, it is not helpful.

That is why the Buddha's teaching is to work first with *anicca*. When you get established in *anicca*, then *dukkha* will naturally become clear to you, and you will understand that however pleasant a feeling may be it passes away. If you develop attachment to it you will become miserable. So misery is inherent in even the most pleasant experience. Understanding of *dukkha*

becomes more and more predominant once you are established in *anicca*.

When you are established in *anicca* and *dukkha*, then the third stage—an understanding of *anattā*—develops, and you think, "What is this phenomenon? Where is 'I'? Things are just happening, there is just a flow of mind and matter interacting." When the "I" dissolves at the experiential level it is helpful. An imposed conception of *anattā* will not help. That is why the Buddha never advised us to start with *anattā*. Start with *anicca*, then *dukkha* will follow, and *anattā* will develop.

When Ramana Maharshi spoke of no doer, he spoke of *anattā*, the third, final stage. He must have reached that stage, so naturally he spoke about it to people who he felt were developed. But it does not mean that a beginner should start working in that way. ❧

Why shouldn't we fell trees at a Dhamma centre?

Why fell trees anywhere? Why only refrain from cutting them down at a Dhamma centre? Trees are so helpful, they create a conducive atmosphere. The environment becomes charged with good vibrations from trees; that's why felling them is not healthy.

It is especially helpful in a Dhamma centre to have foliage all around. An area that is very dry, without trees or plants, won't make a very good Dhamma centre. Foliage is important, therefore trees are important. ❧

While practising Vipassana shouldn't we also focus on other things than the physical sensations? Like seeing and hearing and so on?

Yes, but not at this stage. That will come later. First you have to develop to the stage where you feel sensations on every particle of the body. Once you become established in this awareness, and a sound comes, it will be so easy to feel the sensations resulting from the sound. If you are not aware of sensations, and you just repeat to yourself, "Oh, this is sound, this is sound," it will not help because it is only a superficial truth.

Sound is a vibration; light, colour and shape are vibrations; smell is a vibration; taste is a vibration; touch is a vibration; any thought arising on the mind is a vibration. But you are not experiencing these vibrations, so you have to first get established in feeling the sensations on the body, and then all other things will follow. ❧

If the same issue keeps coming in many courses, would it be appropriate to deal with that worldly issue? Or if I continue sitting courses will this issue go away? For example, I worry whether I should have a certain career or get a more serious job.

Sitting and thinking about a good career but not looking for one won't help. The basic point to bear in mind when looking for a career is that the work should not help others to break their *sīla*. If you do something that helps others to break their *sīla*, this is as bad as breaking your own *sīla*. If you are aware of this, you will naturally abstain from any kind of career that harms others.

Meditation will give you the clarity of mind that will help you to choose which career is best. But while you meditate in a course don't keep thinking about your career. That is wrong, don't do that. ❧

We have heard that the colours black, red, and dark green are not conducive to practising Vipassana. Is this true?

Well, you cannot experience this for yourself at this stage because you can't feel the vibrations of inanimate things. But continuing to grow in Dhamma, a stage will come where you will start to feel the vibrations not only of animate beings, but also of inanimate things. At that time the difference between colours will become clear to you. At this stage you had better accept what your elders say. What else can be done? [laughter] ❧

In daily life I practise yoga. I would like to incorporate yoga into the Vipassana course.

During the recess periods on a course you can have a good walk; only walking is permitted as a physical exercise. For the rest of the time, you should sit and meditate.

But I have difficulty sitting and I find the stretching helps a lot.

Then walk a little during meditation hours, but don't do yoga. There are two reasons for this: First, you have joined the course because you want to remain within yourself, and if you do yoga your attention will be diverted to think about the different yoga postures.

Another problem is that on the course there are others around you meditating seriously, and if they see you perform this or that exercise, they will say, "That is wonderful! I have never done that, please teach me how to do it." You will create a distraction for others.

So during a meditation course, only meditate and walk. Walking is good enough exercise for the body. When you go home, then yes, yoga is a wonderful exercise for your physical health. ❧

I have a question related to the previous question: I think sitting for a long time is not good for the body. I know long-term meditators who have sciatic nerve problems. I wondered whether the sensation of discomfort at some point indicates danger, and people need to know that maybe sitting twelve hours a day isn't so good for them.

If it is good for so many others, then it is good for you also! [laughter] Of course, when you are not accustomed to sit cross-legged, you will find it difficult, so we say, "It is not necessary to sit cross-legged. Sit in any posture that suits you."

But meditating on a course doesn't harm anyone in any way. No case has come to us suggesting that sitting for a long time has harmed people. In fact the whole technique opens up energy, and a free flow of energy inside purifies the body as well as the mind. If there is anything wrong in the body it is actually helped by the meditation, not harmed.

If you forcefully sit *adhiṭṭhāna* for eight, ten or eleven hours a day it would be wrong. *Adhiṭṭhāna* is given for three hours a day, and only after Vipassana. The rest of the time you are free to change your position, you can even lie down. Practise in the sitting position, but when it becomes unavoidable, lie down or walk for five minutes and then again sit. There are no restrictions on moving. ❧

WAN-LI, TAIWAN
AUGUST 3, 1998

LET DHAMMA GLOW IN ITS PURITY
DHAMMA TO SPREAD

My dear Dhamma children:

You are all eager to see the pure teaching of the Enlightened One revived here, and I too am eager for this to happen. However, if you arrange ten-day courses but do not emphasize the importance of applying Dhamma in life, the courses will become just another type of rite, ritual or ceremony, and they will not have the effect they should.

With Vipassana one learns how to apply *sīla* in life, and *sīla* starts with *sammā-vācā*, right speech. Right speech means abstaining from false statements, chatter and backbiting. So wherever Vipassana is taught we advise that if anyone finds fault with a Dhamma brother or a Dhamma sister, they should not say a word about it to others, but meet the brother or sister privately and politely explain, "I do not think your action is according to Dhamma."

You can explain your view politely once or twice, and if the person still has not understood you can say, "I am going to inform a senior or the Teacher that we have a different understanding of this situation." This is the proper way of dealing with people with whom you have a difference of opinion. The moment you start talking ill of another in his or her absence you are breaking *sīla*, the first important *sīla* of *sammā-vācā*.

You should examine yourself. If you have said something bad about a Dhamma brother or sister, correct it as quickly as possible. Go and ask pardon, saying, "I made this mistake, I said bad things about you when I should have come and talked with you."

This is a *saṅgha*, a family of Vipassana meditators. Speaking ill of others will create friction and divisions. Some may accept the information they hear and others may not, and gradually conflict will start, which is totally against Dhamma. The Buddha stated clearly that some actions are extremely unwholesome and give very harmful results; creating a division in the *saṅgha* is one of these few very harmful actions.

There are bound to be differences of opinion when family members live together or meditators serve together; there is nothing wrong in that. You should not blindly follow one student, however senior this person may be. But this difference of opinion should not lead to a split in the Vipassana *saṅgha*.

I keep teaching that all the members of the Dhamma family, the Vipassana family, must have nothing but love in their eyes towards each other, with never a trace of anger or hatred.

There are political and social organizations where people who crave power and status try

to create a group of their own followers and to denounce others, but such behaviour is not appropriate for the field of Dhamma. The moment you realize that there is a group which follows you and another group which does not, you should immediately realize, "There is something wrong with me, that is why I want everyone to fulfil my wishes. Oh, my ego is so strong! I am not fit to serve Dhamma, let alone to lead in Dhamma. I'd better retreat and practise Dhamma at this time."

Unless one starts accepting the fact that one's ego is strong, and one's attachment to the ego is strong, one can never come out of this bad habit of finding fault with others. The moment one realizes, "Look, I have said these words and taken this action because of my ego," then the ego automatically starts dissolving, dissolving. But if you keep justifying your actions, either vocal or physical, then the ego becomes stronger and stronger.

This morning I heard that at a recent event one or two of my Dhamma daughters became upset because their seating plan was not followed. This is such a sorry situation. Where is Dhamma in this attitude? The ego is so important to these people. I have so much compassion for them. They must grow in Dhamma so that they have love and compassion for others, instead of finding fault.

This is a minor incident but it is how impurity starts and develops. If we don't say a word against this kind of impurity, you will make your ego stronger and generate aversion for others.

Something else damaging has come to my attention: The traditional teaching of Vipassana is the same everywhere in the world; you are not permitted to make any change in it. I have the history of Vipassana before my eyes. Vipassana was totally lost within 500 years in India because people from different sects started to add something from their own tradition to it. Gradually whatever was added became predominant and Vipassana faded out. The purity has been maintained for 2,300 years in the land of my birth, Burma; handed down from teacher to pupil. If they had added anything to it, the addition would have become predominant and Vipassana would have been lost; but they kept it pure and this is why we have received it today. We must not start spoiling it in the name of improvement. Everybody who spoils it says, "I am improving it!"—as if he or she is much wiser than the Buddha or the tradition. This is a dangerous tendency; one has to be very careful.

Therefore, those who wish the pure Dhamma that is arising now to be maintained for centuries must understand we have a great responsibility. We have no authority to change the discipline, the teaching or the instructions. If you really want to change something, send the main Teacher your suggestion, and only if the Teacher agrees can the change be made. If you feel you are wiser than the Teacher and you can alter the teaching according to your own wisdom, you will harm the tradition, you will harm the spread of Dhamma.

Another point should be clear: The evening discourses, the daily instructions and the teaching of Anapana, Vipassana and Metta have been translated into more than thirty languages and we have to ensure these translations are made correctly. An incorrect translation will

give wrong instructions for years to come to those who speak that language.

Understand the process: Once a translation has been completed, one or more students who are well versed in both the relevant languages must verify it. Then I am sent samples of the voices of several students from that country, and from these I select the voice that has the proper vibration. Finally, that person has to come all the way to Igatpuri to record the tapes. People have come from far-off places like Mongolia, Indonesia and Russia. The recordings must be done only at Igatpuri or at a centre that is nearly as developed as Igatpuri because the vibration of the atmosphere is very important. Your input on the tape carries the vibration of the atmosphere around you. If this vibration is not healthy, whatever you say, even if you are giving a hundred-percent correct translation, will not have the effect it should have. We have seen the difference in recordings, and that is why these rules have been made.

Regarding the courses, we want people to get established in the technique by sitting several ten-day courses before they take a *Satipaṭṭhāna* course. The *Satipaṭṭhāna* course provides an intellectual understanding of the practice and confirms that what we are practising does indeed accord with the words of the Buddha.

Generally people are more interested in understanding Dhamma at the intellectual level than practising it, but in Dhamma the practice is much more important than anything else. We can't make any kind of concession here. If the *Satipaṭṭhāna* course becomes a student's first course what will this person actually practise? He or she will only play intellectual games. If we keep giving *Satipaṭṭhāna* courses to students who are only interested in playing intellectual games, we are harming these people, creating a barrier to their progress. They will never practise seriously because they are happy playing intellectual games. Dhamma is not for intellectual games. Be careful.

The other day I came to know of another small incident: Students were asked to sit, meditate and chant just before the press arrived for an interview. It is shocking to make an exhibition of our meditation; this is against Dhamma.

On the last day of the ten-day course discourses I say, "Meditate at your home for an hour in the morning and evening, and when you are travelling in a bus or a train observe the truth within with open eyes." The moment you close your eyes in public you are making a show for others, "Look, I am a great meditator, even while travelling I meditate!" Making an exhibition of Dhamma means you have not understood Dhamma.

Whenever I see somebody making a show that he is a religious person with a mark on the forehead or an ornament or a certain kind of cloth, I understand this person has no trace of Dhamma. If Dhamma is present, what need is there to make an exhibition of it? Your behaviour will say that you are a good Dhamma person.

Whenever I give a public talk anywhere in the world, students arrive about an hour earlier and meditate in the hall. About fifteen minutes after the meditation is over the public arrives and the discourse begins. While the students are meditating, no non-meditators are allowed in; otherwise their meditation would become a show.

These are small details but they are important because one always starts to slip because of a small inattentiveness, and then one keeps slipping further and further down. In the past this is how Dhamma deteriorated, not only in India but also in other countries.

You are all leaders of Vipassana here. It is good that particular incident happened during the press conference; it convinced me that now is the time to explain to my sons and daughters that this is not a Dhammic way to work. If I were to refrain from explaining, in case somebody becomes unhappy, I would not be a good teacher. It is my duty to explain these things. Wherever I have found such mistakes, I point out the errors with love and compassion; the mistakes are rectified and then the Dhamma starts glowing in its own purity.

I see great potential for the pure Dhamma to arise here. My dream is that one day the great nations of China and India will take up Dhamma in its purity, and the entire world will accept it, and there will be great benefit to miserable people.

So not only in your interest but also in the interest of all humanity, see that you maintain the purity of the technique, the purity of the discipline, the purity of the rules and regulations. They are all framed to keep the technique pure, to keep the Dhamma pure.

This is the path of pure Dhamma. We are not here to please people, we are here to serve them, to help them come out of their misery. Whether there are fewer or more students doesn't matter. Pure Dhamma should be given so that they can develop and come out of misery. That is more important for us than counting heads.

In the fourteen years I was with my teacher, I saw how he taught Dhamma with strong discipline. In the twenty-nine years I have been teaching Dhamma, success has come only because of the strong discipline. People feel a Goenka course is hard, but good results come from it and they attend.

I am sure all of you will maintain the purity of Dhamma and spread Dhamma in its purity—for your good and for the good of many, not only of this generation, but of the coming generations.

May Dhamma grow in its purity. May more and more people benefit by Dhamma.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 10, 1999
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questioner: Goenkaji, please explain how the Dhamma servers should meditate at 9:00 p.m. when assistant teachers play the workers' *mettā* tape.

Goenkaji: The Dhamma servers should understand properly what they are doing. They should not make it a rite or a ritual; otherwise it will be a waste of time, and this will set an unwholesome precedent which will be harmful in the future.

They should keep their attention on the top of the head, be aware of any sensation there and the truth that this sensation is impermanent. When they are with the truth of *anicca* they are ready to accept the *mettā* vibrations or Dhamma vibrations that are given. They should also have a feeling of acceptance of good vibrations. If they start working like this they will soon start experiencing that there are good vibrations which they can receive.

During the day they have been working hard; then in this session they gain new strength, and become fresh to work again the next day. ❧

May we hold three-day Anapana courses for adults?

The three-day residential Anapana courses for new adult students are at present prohibited. An experimental course with new discourses was given a few months back in Jaipur, and we are watching the results. We also have to get feedback from the West because some courses have been given there.

In some cases, especially in India, people go to a meditation course with high expectations. They think, "I will get peace and harmony when I meditate, wonderful!" But within the three-day course they don't experience peace because this is a type of meditation where the mind is operated on. You all know that during the first three days of a course there is a lot of reaction. So the poor student returns home with all this on the surface—pains here and there and agitation. At home he will say to others, "I have done Vipassana and it is useless, I wasted my time." Now we have put up a barrier preventing this person from taking a course in the future, and we have also made him a tool to spread negativity to others.

Those who feel some peace on the three-day course say, "Now that I know what those people teach, I will continue at home. Why should I spend ten days there? They have explained the rest of the technique of Vipassana, I've got enough." Again, we have created a barrier.

So we have to see whether these Anapana course experiments are really fruitful. At present, three-day courses for new adults should not be given. ❧

Can parents teach Anapana to their children and vice versa? Can doctors teach their patients, and meditators their terminally ill relatives and friends?

Only those specially permitted may teach Anapana; others should not do so. The special permission is for parents to show their children, sons and daughters their parents, schoolteachers their pupils, and doctors their patients.

Parents may ask their children, "Just observe the breath, observe the breath," for two, three or five minutes, that's all; they should not teach a whole day course. Like this—to your parents, children, pupils or patients, you may show how to practise Anapana for a few minutes, but not for the whole day, not as a course. ❧

Although there is an emphasis on secularism in India there are many castes, creeds and faiths. Would you like to say something about resolving the problems that arise out of these?

Vipassana solves all such problems. One cannot be said to be a high- or low-grade person just because one has come out of the womb of a woman of a particular caste. Dhamma does not discriminate in that way. A human being is a human being whether of this or that caste or community. If one is established in Dhamma this is wonderful, and others have to pay respect. But if somebody is of very high caste but does not practise Dhamma, this person deserves pity.

At a Vipassana centre everyone works together and understands that it is only the Dhamma that makes one high or low. The problems of caste or community dissolve. People from all communities, religious traditions and castes sit together, stand in line and eat together. They forget whether they are rich or poor, highly educated or uneducated, from high or low caste. Vipassana is the only solution, not only for this country, but also for the world. ❧

Can an assistant teacher add anything to the instructions or discourses on a ten-day course or children's course?

Why would a teacher want to add something or correct something? Is there any defect in the teaching? The teaching has been accepted by the whole world and there have been no comments that there is something wrong with it.

There is a tendency for subtle ego to arise in a teacher sitting on the Dhamma seat and for him or her to think, "I am not here just to handle this equipment. Guruji has spoken a lot, so I should say something now." And as soon as one teacher adds something, another teacher will feel he or she must add even more. Deviation will start, and within a few generations, or maybe even within a few years, the whole teaching will be spoiled.

The Buddha's teaching which is given here is *kevalaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ*—complete, with nothing to be added; *kevalaṃ parisuddhaṃ*—so pure that nothing has to be taken out of it. No teacher, assistant teacher, or children's course teacher should make the mistake of adding to or subtracting from this teaching. Work as you are asked. ❧

Why is it important for us—students, Dhamma servers, trustees, ATs, and teachers—to practise a few minutes of *mettā* after our daily sittings?

Do this for your own benefit. *Mettā* generates good, wholesome vibrations for others and as soon as you start generating these, you yourself benefit. In the same way, when you generate unwholesome vibrations of ill will towards others you are the first victim and become miserable.

Now you have to change that habit pattern so you think, "Instead of generating ill will let me learn how to generate goodwill for others." You can't generate goodwill unless your mind is to some extent pure, so you sit for an hour to purify your mind, and then learn how to generate goodwill for others. It is an exercise that helps you to change your behaviour pattern. ❧

Since Vipassana is so simple, direct, free from trappings and can be practised anywhere, why do we need the Grand Pagoda?

You can practise Vipassana anywhere, but why do I ask you all to sit together once a week? Although you practise at home every morning and evening it is possible that due to different adverse circumstances, your meditation might become weak. One of your Dhamma brothers or sisters might generate good vibrations during meditation and if you sit together your battery will be charged, you will be able to work well. You will be refreshed for the whole week and strong enough to face difficulties.

This benefit can result from twenty, thirty or fifty people sitting together. When this large pagoda is built eight to ten thousand people will sit there together every week—maybe for an hour, half a day or a full day. People will gain such benefit from the sittings, such Dhamma energy. ❧

Do you see any danger in Vipassana meditators mixing Vipassana with the therapies or techniques with which they earn their livelihoods?

As soon as you mix Vipassana with your livelihood you are harming yourself and also others. Understand how this happens: You might help people by some kind of therapy, and there is nothing wrong with helping people, carry on with that; but once you add Vipassana to it, people will think that the benefit they have gained from Vipassana is because of the other therapy. Even if they realize that the benefit is due to Vipassana, now Vipassana will be seen as a secondary therapy—just a supplement to the main therapy.

That is how you might start harming others. Anybody who creates an obstacle in the progress of another on the path of liberation is performing the most unwholesome action possible. It is very harmful. Under no circumstances, either directly or indirectly, should Vipassana be used as a profession, as a livelihood. ❧

Why is the Dhamma seat higher than the students' seats in the Dhamma Hall?

The only purpose of all the rules that have been made for a centre is that those who come to

learn Vipassana should receive the maximum benefit from their stay. There is no other reason for the rules. The Dhamma seat is not placed higher so that the ego of the teacher can be puffed up. No.

One mundane reason is that unless the teacher is slightly higher, he or she won't be able to see the students and the students won't be able to see the teacher. However this is not the only reason. Another reason is the teacher does not teach in a mechanical way, but generates vibrations of love and compassion. Vibrations always move from a higher level to a lower level, therefore the students who sit below the teacher can benefit from these *mettā* vibrations. Everything that is done is so that the student who comes to a course, leaving behind all the responsibilities of life for ten days, gets the maximum advantage from their stay. ❧

Should there be flowers and fruit trees at a centre?

When you talk of trees at a centre, certainly everything must be green, full of flowers and fruit. There is nothing wrong with this. Here we have flowers and fruit—it doesn't harm anybody. Let there be flowers and fruit! ❧

You say that we should practise "effortless observation," and then you tell us we have to control our minds. Could you please clarify?

"Effortless observation" means you should not make any effort to create a sensation that you like, or to get rid of any kind of sensation that you don't like. It is effortless because things are happening and you don't make any effort to change them. You are not the master of the sensations, it is the law of nature that is working. Just observe, do nothing. But effort has to be made to observe. If you don't make an effort to observe sensations the mind will wander here and there and you will think, "Oh, this is effortless," but what will you gain by that? So the effort to be aware and attentive is a very important part of the meditation, but effort to create a particular type of sensation is wrong. ❧

You teach *attā hi attano nātho*—you are your own master. Then how can any external agency, or Māra, affect us, our minds, or our Dhamma pursuits?

Māra is not an external agency but an internal agency. Māra is the personification of your own impurities, the habit pattern of the mind which keeps generating impurities, keeps dwelling on this or that sensual object. Now you have to develop *attā hi attano nātho*, you have to develop mastery of your mind, so that Māra does not play a game that results in your leaving the path and harming yourself. Again become master of yourself and Māra cannot harm you in any way. No Māra can harm you if you are really *attā hi attano nātho*. ❧

In the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* we are asked to become aware of our lack of awareness. How is this possible?

To come out of this lack of awareness you have to be alert and realize, "Look, I am losing awareness now. My mind is wandering away or is becoming drowsy. I must be aware."

You are aware that something is going wrong. At times you are not aware of this, quite true. But as soon as you realize what has happened, think to yourself, "Oh look, I made that mistake, now I will be very alert, I won't allow it to happen again." So as soon as this laziness, drowsiness or lack of awareness starts, you are alert, and you don't allow it to overwhelm you. This alertness is necessary. ❧

Could you give us some guidelines on how to obtain funds for Dhamma outreach activities?

I am not here to teach people how to raise funds. That is not the job of a Dhamma teacher. The more you ask people for money, the more they will run away from you. Don't make people run away from Dhamma! Just place the information before them, whether they are meditators or non-meditators, "Here is an opportunity to gain merits. This type of good work is being done." If the person is convinced and feels like giving, well he or she gets an opportunity to earn merits. But never press anybody saying, "Give money, give money. Look, our project is so wonderful! You must give money." That is totally wrong; it is not allowed in Dhamma.

A monk stands before the home of a householder with a begging bowl but he is not there only for food. His volition is to give an opportunity to the householder to gain merits by giving alms. If the householder does not want to gain those merits, smilingly, giving *mettā*, the monk moves further. This tradition has to be maintained in every sector of Dhamma. ❧

In these two special years of Sayagyi's birth centenary and the new millennium, what projects would you like us to focus on? Are there further guidelines for us?

The most important thing for the coming one or two years is that everyone around the world who has taken even one course, and has even slightly benefited from Vipassana should develop a feeling of gratitude towards this great person and express this gratitude.

U Ba Khin was not an ordinary person. Those who were close to him understood what strong *pāramīs* he had from the past, and what infinite *mettā* he generated for others. He had such a great Dhamma volition that Vipassana should return to India, the country from which Burma received it, in order to pay back the debt of gratitude. He was convinced that from India it would spread around the world. If he had not had that great volition there would have been no Goenka. None of the credit should go to Goenka, the whole credit for the spread of Dhamma goes to U Ba Khin. In this centenary year of the birth of U Ba Khin we should all feel great gratitude towards him.

The best way to express this gratitude is to strengthen yourself in Dhamma. Become an ideal Vipassana meditator. People who know you should think, "This is a student of the U Ba Khin tradition, what a wonderful example this person is!"

The second way of showing your gratitude to him is to help more and more people to benefit from Vipassana. People around the world do not know that this wonderful technique exists by which they can come out of their misery. The technique is so scientific, rational, result-oriented and non-sectarian—no conversion is

involved in it. People should know this. Think what you can do to help this awareness spread.

In the West a seminar will be held to inform people about Vipassana. Good, this will help those in the West to hear about the Dhamma. Near Mumbai the new pagoda is coming up. Because of it people will remember for centuries how Dhamma returned to India from Burma, sent by Sayagyi U Ba Khin. This pagoda will be like a lighthouse that will spread light throughout the world inspiring respect and gratitude towards Sayagyi U Ba Khin.

The Dhamma hall inside the pagoda will be used only for Vipassana, nothing else. Others will not be able to enter even to see what is inside. Only those who have come to meditate will be welcomed.

Outside there will be a gallery where visitors can see what sort of person the Buddha was, how he taught this wonderful technique, and the benefit that people gained during their lifetime. This will give them inspiration to take a Vipassana course at a centre somewhere. This gallery is important because unfortunately in this country people know nothing about the Buddha or his teaching.

Continue to serve Dhamma with all the gratitude to Sayagyi U Ba Khin. May you all be successful. ❧

[Note: At this point the questions being asked by assistant teachers came to an end. The remaining questions were asked by Dhamma servers.]

Guruji, can you tell us what makes a good Dhamma server?

You become a good Dhamma server by doing good Dhamma service. Good Dhamma service is done when your volition is that those who have come to the course should benefit. You are not serving in order to increase your ego by behaving like a police officer, shouting at those who are not working according to discipline. If you behave like that, the unwholesome *saṅkhāras* that you create will harm the students. Make wholesome *saṅkhāras*, full of *mettā*, and you will become a very good Dhamma server. ❧

Guruji, can you tell us what makes a good trustee?

One who is trustworthy is a trustee. Get established in Dhamma and become a trustworthy person. The purpose of serving as a trustee is to spread Dhamma, to serve Dhamma. It is not a position of power or status. It is madness to think, "Now I am a trustee I have a certain power so I can take this action." No, you have no power, you only have an opportunity to serve people.

After one, two or three years each trustee has to resign and another person is given the opportunity to serve. One reason for this policy is to give more and more people the opportunity to gain merits by serving Dhamma as a trustee. Another reason is that once a trustee has stepped down we can examine how much this person has really developed in Dhamma. Is the same amount of service still being given?

If not then he or she has not learned Dhamma, and previously the service was not to Dhamma but to the position, to one's own ego. If someone who is no longer a trustee continues to give the same amount of service, then it is clear that this person is developing in Dhamma. ❧

Guruji, finally, can you tell us what makes a good assistant teacher?

If one serves in a proper way one is a good assistant teacher. How does one serve properly? The position of assistant teacher is not to inflate the ego; it is a chance to serve people, to develop one's *pāramis*. There must not be a trace of ego in the teacher. One is serving others so one should be filled with humbleness and *mettā*.

For this purpose we ask that every assistant and teacher should serve one course either as a course manager or as an ordinary server. The teacher's ego is deflated by this service, and others see that this is a wonderful tradition where the teachers also serve. This is good for the teacher and good for others.

There is only one yardstick to measure an assistant teacher: If the ego is increasing and the behaviour is becoming rough and rude, this person is not a good Dhamma teacher. If the ego is decreasing and the teacher is full of love and compassion, one is a good Dhamma teacher. The whole idea is to serve more and more people in Dhamma. ❧

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 10, 1999
CLOSING ADDRESS

DHAMMA DETERMINATION

My dear Dhamma meditators:

Once again we have gathered for this annual meeting. I have listened to the report of what was done during the last year, and it is quite satisfactory, quite encouraging. I also noted what you are going to do in the coming year. This is a very important year because it is the birth centenary of the great lay saint, Sayagyi U Ba Khin, who was so compassionate. In his memory we have to work hard.

There is nothing wrong in making memorials and monuments to Sayagyi, but the best memorial to him is an individual—each of you is a memorial to him. Develop yourself in Dhamma to such an extent that others think, "Here is a Vipassana meditator who learned Dhamma in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Look how it changes people!" Make this effort to show your gratitude towards him, to encourage people to come on the path and liberate themselves, and also because it is in your own interest.

There are two important things that each meditator in this tradition has to do: Do your best to get established in pure Dhamma and work to fulfil the noble mission of this saintly person. What a strong Dhamma volition he had! He said, "I have to pay back the debt of gratitude to the country from which we received this invaluable jewel." When he discussed newspaper reports on the situation in India, we saw how much compassion he had. He said, "What is happening in that country where Buddhas arise, where pure Dhamma arises? People are quarrelling and fighting in the name of religion! There is sectarian conflict, racial conflict and caste conflict. If they get this wonderful Dhamma, the whole country will come out of misery. There is no other way. So long as these conflicts exist there will be nothing but misery, and they can be eradicated only if the country gets pure Dhamma."

I was fearful and thought, "Who will accept Vipassana in India? Nobody knows me there."

"Don't worry," he answered, "The time has ripened. People who have good *pāramīs* have taken birth as human beings on this earth and they will automatically come to take Dhamma. As soon as they hear the word 'Vipassana', they won't be able to resist. Once India starts to accept Dhamma it will spread like wildfire around the world. Previously it spread from that country, and now once again the time has

ripened and it will spread from there. The clock of Vipassana has struck." He was so confident about this.

I doubted that I would be successful, but somehow, within just one month of my arrival in this country, the first course was given, and then course after course, the Ganges of Dhamma started flowing.

People are miserable. A short-tempered person who is full of negativity understands at the intellectual level, "This is not good for me. I am making myself and others miserable; I want to come out of it." But how can this person come out of it? Anybody involved in any kind of vice is unhappy and wants to change from vice to virtue, but how? Mere sermons won't help. People keep listening to good sermons and expect that by some miracle their life will change, but it doesn't work. Everyone has to work out their own salvation. But how?

People should know there is a way which does not depend on blind faith or blind belief. Vipassana is scientific, rational and pragmatic, and brings results here and now. If you work on it you will get results, and then naturally you will have confidence in it. Step by step you will reach the final goal. The entire Dhamma is to abstain from unwholesome activities, perform wholesome activities, and purify the mind—the totality of the mind, not just the surface. There is nothing more to add, and nothing to take out—*paripuṇṇa, parisuddha*. All beings desire to come out of misery, and here is a way. Everyone who feels misery and wants to come out of it should hear that this technique exists, and that they are welcome to give it a trial. This is how Vipassana spread at the time of Buddha, and this is how my Dhamma father wanted it to spread.

We are not interested in increasing the number of people who call themselves disciples of Goenka or U Ba Khin; that would be meaningless. We are not here to establish an organized religion. The moment that happens the organized religion becomes predominant and Dhamma is lost. A teacher or assistant teacher should never say to a student, "Well, you are so weak, how can you liberate yourself? Come and surrender to me, take refuge in me, and I will liberate you."

Then once people have given Vipassana a trial we should help them to progress further on the path. What facilities are needed to do that? How can we encourage them? We start helping by sharing the best we have with them. The only aim is that more and more people come out of their misery and experience peace and harmony: *Bahujana-hitāya, bahujana-sukhāya*.

There is a danger that in the future a son or a grandson of a Vipassana meditator might say, "I am a *vipaśyī* because I was born in a family of *vipaśyīs*," and the *vipaśyī* caste will start. Without practising Vipassana or knowing what it is, people will be called "*vipaśyī*." This is a big danger, and you have to be careful from now onwards. Understand, without actually practising Vipassana there is no benefit. Encourage others to work by working ardently yourself. This is the way we can pay back the debt of gratitude to this saintly person.

This wonderful technique was lost not only in India, but all around the world. The time has come now for Vipassana to spread again, and we have to see that it remains as long as possible to serve people. It will serve people only when the purity of the technique is maintained. Once anything is mixed with it the efficacy is gone. Then people won't care for it and it will be lost, as it was lost thousands of years ago. We have to be very careful that this does not happen.

Whatever we have received from this saintly person, which he in turn received from the tradition, we have to maintain in its pristine purity. We won't add anything to it or subtract anything. *Kevalaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ*—it is complete. *Kevalaṃ parisuddhaṃ*—it is pure. If we maintain the purity from generation to generation, a large number of people will start coming out of misery. Now the time has come and the bell of Vipassana has rung. Vipassana will start to spread—but not miraculously. Somebody has to maintain the purity of the technique, and work so that it spreads.

At this annual conference these few points should be very clear. And each of you leaving this conference must think, "How can I best apply my ability, my intelligence and my strength so that this message spreads, and more people learn about it?

"When people want to practise this, how can I help them develop further? What can I do so that more and more people get established in Dhamma?"

And thirdly, make the determination: "I myself will never spoil the purity of the technique, and as far as possible I will not allow, encourage nor support anybody to spoil the purity of the technique."

Our conference will have been successful if you carry these determinations with you. And it will be successful, there is no doubt about that. Dhamma is there to help you. Dhamma has been helping till now and it will continue to help you. But it requires a strong determination from you to pay back the debt of gratitude to this saintly person, because of whom you received the Dhamma.

Just as we have a feeling of gratitude towards the Buddha so we also have deep gratitude towards the tradition which maintained the purity, and deep gratitude to Sayagyi U Ba Khin, who had such a strong Dhamma volition. To fulfil his noble desire we will do everything we possibly can—not only for our good but also for the good of all others.

A large number of people around the world are suffering, suffering.

May pure Dhamma spread around the world. May more and more miserable people come in contact with Dhamma, apply Dhamma in life, and be liberated from all miseries.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

DHAMMA GIRI, INDIA
JANUARY 25, 1999

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DHAMMA SERVICE

My dear Dhamma children:

Giving Dhamma service is a great responsibility. While fulfilling it, you must understand you have your own limitations and work within them. A Dhamma server should help students with management problems but should not give them meditation advice. Only those who have been authorized may teach Dhamma. When you are developed enough to give such instructions, I will happily make you assistant teachers, but it takes time to ripen in Dhamma; until then continue to work within the limitations set for you.

When a student is in trouble, you might feel you could say the same thing the teachers would say, for example, "Have slightly hard breathing. Bring your attention to the extremities." But you must never give instructions because there is a danger that although you might be helpful, you might also give guidance that goes totally against Vipassana. This is what happened last night when a student complained of intense pain and an experienced Dhamma server said, "I will give you acupressure to relieve your pain." What a serious mistake!

A few months back I got a call saying someone on a course in the Himalayas had practised Reiki on a student who was in a great deal of pain. These two events were serious errors. In both cases I had to take strong action in order to protect the purity of the technique.

Understand why this is so important: Impurities are brought to the surface by the practice of Vipassana, and only Vipassana can eradicate them—no other technique. If you mix another technique with Vipassana, it will become predominant and Vipassana will be forgotten.

In the past this happened in India. Our research tells us that for the five hundred years following the Buddha, Vipassana was taught in its pristine purity. Then unscrupulous people started to add to it, and whatever was added became predominant and Vipassana faded away. Even during the short time I have been teaching, some people who had benefited after taking several courses decided to use this wonderful technique in their own religion. But if they had taught it exactly as we do, their sectarian views would have had no place, so they added the instruction to observe the soul. The result was that within ten years their students came to me and said, "Now we don't observe sensations, we only observe the soul." They have totally lost Vipassana. And the same thing will happen here in centres if anything is added.

The Dhamma has returned to India after two thousand years and is now spreading around the world. My responsibility as the Teacher is to see it is maintained in its pristine purity for the benefit of future generations. One who is at the helm has to be very careful; therefore I cannot tolerate certain activities that harm the spread of Dhamma. The first such activity is sexual misbehaviour, and the second is instructing students to add anything to Vipassana.

I know most of you would never make such mistakes, but you should learn from yesterday's incident and ensure such things never happen in the future, wherever you give service.

My teacher, Sayagyi U Ba Khin, wouldn't allow me to take my first course because I had told him I intended to join it in order to rid myself of migraine. Even though I was a leader of the Indian community in Rangoon, a leader of the business community, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, a multi-millionaire, Sayagyi said, "No, I can't teach you. If you wish to learn a high spiritual path I will help you, but if you come for relief from a physical disease then leave; you are devaluing Dhamma."

If a student is in pain and we start using acupressure, Reiki or anything else, we would harm the students; we would devalue Dhamma. Be careful. This advice is given with *mettā* to help you understand: Wherever you give any Dhamma service, you must ensure that no server ever gives meditation instructions to students and nobody advises students to mix anything else with Vipassana. I am sure you yourselves won't do such things.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

NAGPUR, INDIA
OCTOBER, 2000

THE IMPORTANCE OF DAILY MEDITATION

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

Sukho buddhānaṃ uppado.
Happy is the arising of Buddhas in the world.

Sukhā saddhammadesanā.
Happy is the teaching of pure Dhamma.

Sukhā saṅghassa sāmaggī.
Happy is the coming together of meditators.

Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho.
Happiness is meditating together.

Two thousand six hundred years ago Gotama the Buddha lived in this country and taught the pure Dhamma, resulting in great happiness for the world. People started to live in accordance with this teaching and to meditate together; there is no greater happiness than this.

Each meditator must develop the strength to face the vicissitudes of life. Therefore it is necessary to meditate an hour every morning and evening, to meditate with other Dhamma brothers and sisters once a week, and to take a ten-day course at least once a year. If we do this, we will keep progressing on the path of Dhamma. Householders face many obstacles to their meditation practice, even those who have renounced the householder's life tell me that they are not able to meditate regularly; but do not give up no matter what difficulties you face.

We do physical exercises to keep the body healthy and strong, but it is even more necessary to keep the mind healthy and strong. Vipassana is a mental exercise, and practising morning and evening is not a waste of time. We live in a complex and stressful world; if the mind is not strong, we will lose our balance and become miserable.

It is fortunate to be born as a human being because only human beings can observe their own mind and eradicate mental defilements from the depth. This work cannot be done by animals or other lower beings. Even a human being cannot do this if he or she does not know this technique. To have a human birth, to find such a wonderful technique, to use it and to benefit from it but then to discontinue the practice is such a misfortune! It is like a bankrupt person who finds a treasure but discards it and returns to bankruptcy, or a sick person who finds medicine but discards it and becomes sick again. Do not let that happen!

Sometimes meditators say to me, "I've stopped meditating because I'm too busy." But that is a poor excuse. After all, you eat three or four times a day, don't you? You do not say, "I am

so busy that I don't have time to eat today." Doing this meditation every morning and evening makes the mind strong, and a strong mind is even more important than a strong body. We will harm ourselves if we forget this.

Sometimes it is not possible to meditate in the same place and at the same time. Although that is ideal, it is not a necessity; what is important is to meditate twice in twenty-four hours. Occasionally one is not even able to meditate alone, so meditate with eyes open and the mind directed inwards, even though people are around. Remember not to make a show of meditation; the others need not know what you are doing. You may not be able to meditate as well as if you had been alone, but at least you have calmed and strengthened the mind a little. Without regular practice the mind will become weak, and a weak mind makes you miserable because it reverts to its old behaviour pattern of generating craving and aversion.

This is truly a sublime teaching: As one starts feeling sensations on the body the door of liberation opens; as one learns to remain equanimous towards the sensations, one enters that door and starts to walk on the path of liberation. Every step taken on this path brings one closer and closer to the final goal. No effort is wasted, each bears fruit.

Lack of awareness of sensations takes us onto the path of misery because one reacts blindly to the sensations out of ignorance.

At the time of death some sensation will arise; if we are unaware and react with aversion, we will go to the lower planes of existence. But a meditator who remains equanimous towards the sensations at the time of death will go to an auspicious plane; this is how we create our own future. Death can come at any time. We do not have an agreement that it will come only when we are prepared, we must be ready whenever it comes. Vipassana is not an ordinary technique; it is a priceless gem that can liberate us from the cycle of birth and death and improve not only this life but also future lives, ultimately leading to full liberation.

The Buddha said, *Vedanā samosaraṇā sabbe dhammā*. Whatever arises in the mind is called a *dhamma*, and a sensation arises on the body with whatever *dhamma* arises in the mind. This is the law of nature; mind and body are interrelated.

Whenever there is sorrow or despair or dullness in daily life for any reason, this technique will help us if we understand, "At this moment there is sorrow or despair or dullness in my mind," and at the same time we start observing either the breath or the sensations. The external reason for the emotion is not important. One understands that there is a defilement in the mind and observes sensations in the body. One practises this thoroughly—not just once or twice but again and again, understanding that every sensation is impermanent, and so the defilement connected to the sensation is also impermanent. After some time the defilement becomes weak and ceases, like a thief who enters a house and, finding that the master of the house is awake, runs away.

Now that we have learnt this technique, we have learnt the art of living. One is not overpowered no matter what defilement arises—whether lust, egotism, envy, fear, or anything

else. All that we have to do is to accept, "This defilement has arisen. Let me face this enemy. Let me see what is happening in my body. It is impermanent, *anicca, anicca*."

Defilements will keep coming throughout life for various reasons. When you become fully liberated from all defilements, you will become a fully liberated person, an *arahant*, but at present that stage is far away. Now, in ordinary life, one has to face these difficulties and we have found a very effective weapon in the form of the sensations. No enemy will be able to overpower us throughout our life, so how could it overpower us at the time of death? It cannot do so. This is the technique for becoming one's own master.

We have learned the art of living, so how can there be sorrow in our lives? Sorrow is caused by defilements, not by external events. If a certain external event occurs and we do not generate defilements, we do not become miserable. Likewise, when we generate defilements we become miserable. We are responsible for our misery. Unfavourable external events will continue to occur, but if we are strong and do not generate defilements, our lives will be filled with happiness and peace. We do not harm others, we help ourselves and help others. Every meditator should understand that one has to meditate regularly so that one is happy and peaceful for the whole life.

May all those who have come on the path of Vipassana recognize that they have received an invaluable jewel.

May all beings be happy, be peaceful, be liberated.

CENTENARY SEMINAR: DHAMMA JOTI, BURMA
JANUARY 9, 2000
OPENING ADDRESS

MAY SAYAGYI'S DHAMMA MISSION BE FULFILLED

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhassa

My dear Dhamma children, Dhamma brothers and sisters:

We have assembled this afternoon on this sacred land to express our feelings of gratitude and devotion to Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Many have come from far-off places—from about thirty countries—and we are fortunate to be here in this Dhamma country that has preserved both *pariyatti* as well as *paṭipatti* in their pristine purity. This is a pilgrimage to a sacred land.

First, we express our feelings of deep gratitude and devotion towards Gotama the *Sammāsambuddha*. As a recluse by the name of Sumedha Brahmin he came in contact with the *Sammāsambuddha* of that time, Dīpaṅkara, and he had sufficient *pāramīs* to easily become an *arahant* on receiving the technique of Vipassana. He had liberation in his hand yet he sacrificed it, saying, "I am not interested in my own liberation. I want to become a *Sammāsambuddha* like you sir, so that I can help countless beings to come out of misery." He understood that to become a *Sammāsambuddha* would take innumerable eons and he would continue suffering while he accumulated *pāramīs*. What a great sacrifice! What great compassion! If at that time he had attained *arahanthood*, or had later attained the stage of *Pacceka Buddha* [solitary Buddha], how could we have received this wonderful Dhamma?

After becoming a *Sammāsambuddha* he spent the remaining forty-five years of his life serving people with love and compassion. The *arahants* trained by him also started serving with infinite compassion throughout the country and beyond. Then from teacher to pupil, the Ganges of Dhamma kept flowing in its pristine purity. We feel so grateful to all the saintly people who maintained it, and express our feelings of devotion towards them.

Unfortunately for India, the pure Dhamma was lost there after only five hundred years. If it had not previously been sent beyond that country's borders, it would have been totally lost. We are grateful to this beautiful land, Burma, in those days called *Suvaṇṇabhūmi* [the Golden Land], which became all the more wonderful when the Dhamma came here.

We are grateful to the two Burmese brothers, Tapassu and Bhalluka, who were the first two laypersons to offer the Buddha food after his enlightenment. They requested a few hairs

from the Enlightened One's head and brought them to this country, where they are enshrined in the historic Shwedagon Pagoda.

The vibrations of the wonderful Shwedagon Pagoda, with the relics of the Enlightened One within, not only help this country but also all humankind. Those who pay respects there by offering flowers etc. are benefited by the vibrations, gain inspiration to keep walking on the Path of Dhamma, and receive merits because of their devotion; those who meditate there receive limitless merits. Now hundreds of you on pilgrimage to this revered land will meditate on the platform of Shwedagon and realize what a wonderful sacred place it is.

Today we feel grateful to Tapassu and Bhalluka, who brought these relics to this country and later returned to India, learned Dhamma from the Buddha and brought that too to this country.

Then we remember the *arahant* Gavampati, who just seven years after the *parinibbāna* of the Enlightened One came to this country to meet King Siiha (or Siṅgharājā). This king ruled the whole country of *Suvaṇṇabhūmi*, which at that time was not limited only to today's Burma but included a great portion of Thailand, the entire peninsula of Malaysia and even Singapore. However, we remember Siṅgharājā not for his political powers but because, with the help of the *arahant* Gavampati, he spread the Dhamma throughout his kingdom.

A few hundred years later the great Emperor Asoka, inspired by his teacher the *arahant* Mogaliputissa, decided to send *Dhamma Dūta* [ambassadors of Dhamma] to countries beyond India, and the *arahants* Soṇa and Uttara came here. The first sermon they gave was the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, and this is no ordinary discourse: From it we can clearly understand that the Buddha's teaching was already known in this part of the world, although it seems people did not understand it deeply. This wonderful *sutta* was given to help establish them in Dhamma. It deals with many wrong views—perhaps views the local people held. It throws light not only on *pariyatti* but also *paṭipatti*; it says every philosophical belief is generated and experienced within the field of mind and matter, whereas Vipassana takes you beyond mind and matter to a stage where there is no *vedanā* and no *taṇhā*. The *arahants* Soṇa and Uttara established both *pariyatti* as well as *paṭipatti* Dhamma in this part of the world, so we express our feelings of deep gratitude towards them.

We don't have the names of all the teachers who taught here after Soṇa and Uttara, but one brilliant name shines before us; that of the *arahant* Dhammadassī, known popularly as Ashin Arahan, who lived eight hundred years ago. Being possessed of all the *abhiññās* [special abilities], he could see a danger in the northern part of the country that the pure Dhamma would deteriorate. The Dhamma teachers there were called *Ari*, indicating their claim to be *ariya* or noble ones, but instead they were actually enemies (*ari*) of the Dhamma because they had spoiled its purity. Also, there was a powerful king in the north called Anorata (or Anuruddha), while in lower Burma there was a weak king, Manoharī (or Mannua). Dhammadassī realized danger to the Dhamma came from the stronger king, as a strong king who was anti-Dhamma was capable of destroying the Dhamma in Burma.

In order to preserve the Dhamma in its pristine purity Dhammadassī went to northern Burma, where he was able to convince King Anorata of the importance of maintaining the whole Teaching contained in the Tipiṭakas in its pristine purity, both *pariyatti* as well as *paṭipatti*. For their preservation, the Tipiṭakas were taken to Pagan, called in those days Arimattanapura, meaning the city where the enemies were destroyed. For this we express our feelings of deep gratitude towards the *arahant* Dhammadassī.

Dhammadassī lived for a number of years in that part of the country, ensuring that the Dhamma was firmly established there; then it is said he went further north and settled in the Sagaing Hills. Not only did he meditate there for the rest of his life, but also he taught many who wanted to learn *paṭipatti* Dhamma. Therefore Sagaing is another sacred place of Dhamma.

After that we don't have the names of the teachers, but from generation to generation, from teacher to pupil, the Dhamma in that area was maintained in its pristine purity.

A hundred and fifty years ago a brilliant teacher of both *pariyatti* and *paṭipatti* named Ledi Sayadaw taught. We have a feeling of infinite gratitude towards this far-sighted monk. He could see that two thousand five hundred years after the Buddha, the second *sāsana* would arise and the Dhamma would spread around the world; and he prepared for this spread.

He knew in most parts of the world people do not respect the Buddha because they know nothing about him or his teachings, so he wondered how the Dhamma could spread. In countries where people have devotion towards the Buddha, the monks can teach; but where they are not accepted he decided laypeople would teach. Until that time the teaching of the Dhamma, especially *paṭipatti*, had been limited only to monks. He opened the gates for laypeople to learn this technique, get established and serve others—a historic and fruitful decision.

He trained one wonderful lay teacher named Saya Thetgyi: We remember him and pay respects to him. He provided a shining example of how a lay teacher should live and serve others with love and compassion. Although outwardly a family man, he lived the pure life of a monk. Generations to come will gain inspiration learning about him: We have deep feelings of gratitude toward Saya Thetgyi.

Then comes this brilliant, shining star in the galaxy of Dhamma; Sayagyi U Ba Khin, my Dhamma father. He had such love and compassion for all suffering humanity and a great Dhamma aspiration for the Dhamma to spread around the world. He was confident that pure Dhamma would once again migrate to India, become established, and from there spread around the world to serve all. He very much wanted to go to India himself but for certain reasons was unable to. Then a situation arose in which, even though I was a Burmese citizen, I received a passport for India. He was so pleased and said, "Now you will go as my representative and you will fulfil my vision, my mission, my wishes."

I hesitated because I knew my limitations and asked, "How can I be successful teaching

Dhamma in a country where people have such deep misunderstandings about the Buddha and his teaching?"

But he encouraged me, saying, "You have nothing to worry about because the Dhamma is going there, and through you I am going. You will be successful, you need not worry."

When I went, all was darkness before me. I wondered, "How will people have enough confidence to stay with me for ten days? Who will arrange the courses?"

But with Sayagyi U Ba Khin's blessing the first ten-day course was held within one month of my arrival in India, and then the Ganges of Dhamma started flowing throughout the country. It was unbelievable.

Thousands of people from around the world came to India at that time, for one reason or the other, and they started taking courses. In turn these meditators pressed me to visit their countries to teach the Dhamma because, they explained, many of their friends and relatives needed Dhamma but could not travel to India to take a course. But I was handicapped because my passport was only endorsed for one country, India. I remembered Sayagyi and his wish that the Dhamma should spread around the world, and I took an *adhiṭṭhāna* that within ten years of my arrival I would either receive an endorsement from my country, Burma, to travel to different countries, or I would take Indian nationality in order to teach the Dhamma abroad.

That ten-year deadline drew nearer and the Burmese government still did not give me an endorsement, but I kept waiting. Finally, as the deadline approached, I applied for Indian nationality, although I realized it takes a long time for naturalization, and even longer to receive a new passport. How Dhamma worked! Three days before the ten-year deadline expired I received Indian nationality, and my passport was given to me exactly ten years to the day after I first arrived in India!

Since the first course I conducted, whenever I teach either Anapana or Vipassana, I begin, of course, by paying respect to the *Sammāsambuddha,* and then I say:

Guruvara, terī ora se,
Deuṅ dharama kā dāna.
On your behalf, my Teacher, I am giving the gift of Dhamma. I am your representative.

When people congratulate me on spreading the Dhamma around the world, I feel quite embarrassed: People should not have the wrong impression and think I am giving the Dhamma. No, my Teacher is giving Dhamma to the world; I am simply a representative. This feeling prevents egotism from developing.

I request all those whom I have trained as teachers to have this same feeling whenever they give Dhamma: The Dhamma is being given by Sayagyi U Ba Khin; you are all simply his representatives.

Therefore, on this day when we have assembled to pay homage to this great householder saint, Sayagyi U Ba Khin, our Dhamma father, let us strengthen our determination to keep serving his mission so that suffering people around the world benefit by the teachings he received from Gotama the Buddha.

The only way to really pay respects to Sayagyi U Ba Khin is to live the life of pure Dhamma and to be a good example to others. Keep serving egolessly, always thinking, "I am a representative of Sayagyi U Ba Khin."

May the Dhamma vision, the Dhamma mission of that great teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin be fulfilled. May more and more people around the world benefit by this wonderful Dhamma. May all come out of their suffering. May all be happy, be peaceful, be liberated.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

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Glossary of P±li Terms

Abhiññ± higher or supernormal knowledge.

¾cariya teacher, guide.

Adhiµµh±na strong determination. One of the ten p±ram².

¾j²va liveilhood.

Ak±liko a quality of Dhamma meaning ‘to be experienced here and now.’

Akusala unwholesome, harmful. Opposite *kusala*.

An±g±m² non-returner; a person who has reached the third stage of enlightenment characterised by the eradication of the fourth and fifth fetters: ill will and passion. This person will attain the *arahant* stage either during this lifetime or in a subsequent rebirth in a *r³pa-brahma loka*. See *ariya*.

¾nanda the Buddha’s chief attendant.

Anapana respiration. *¾n±p±na-sati:* awareness of respiration.

Anatt± non-self, egoless, without essence, without substance. One of the three basic characteristics. See *lakkha*ª*a*.

Arahant/arahat Fully liberated being; a person who has reached the fourth and final stage of enlightenment, characterised by the eradication of the last five fetters: craving for existence in the material world, craving for existence in the immaterial world, conceit, restlessness and ignorance. See *Buddha, ariya*.

Ariya noble; saintly person. One who has purified one’s mind to the point that of experiencing the ultimate reality (*nibb±na*). There are four levels of *ariya*: *sot±panna* (‘stream-enterer’): *sakad±g±m²* (‘once-returner’); *an±g±m²* (‘non-returner’); and *arahat* (who will undergo no further rebirth after this present existence).

¾sanas yoga postures.

¾shram residence for monks.

¾tm± the self; the soul.

Aµµhakath± commentary of P±li Canon texts.

Avijj± ignorance, illusion. The first link in the chain of Conditioned Arising (*paµicca samupp±da*). Together with *r±ga* and *dosa*, one of the three principal mental defilements. These three are the root causes of all other mental impurities and hence of suffering. Synonym of *moha*.

Avivadam±n± not quarrelling.

¾yatana sphere, region, especially the six spheres of perception (*sa¼±yatana*), i.e., the five physical senses plus the mind, and their corresponding objects, namely:

eye (*cakkhu*) and visual objects (*r³pa*),
ear (*sota*) and sound (*sadda*),
nose (*gh±na*) and odour (*gandha*),
tongue (*jivh±*) and taste (*rasa*),
body (*k±ya*) and touch (*phoµµhabba*),
mind (*mano*) and objects of mind,
i.e., thoughts of all kinds (dhamma).

These are also called the six faculties. See *indriya*.

Bahujana-hit±ya, bahujana-sukh±ya for the good of many, for the happiness of many.

Bala strength, power. The five mental strengths are faith (*saddh±*), effort (*viriya*), awareness (*sati*), concentration (*sam±dhi*), wisdom (*paññ±*). When they are in a less developed form, these are called the five faculties. See *indriya*.

*Bha*ª*ga* dissolution. An important stage in the practice of Vipassana, the experience of the dissolution of the apparent solidity of the body into subtle vibrations which are constantly arising and passing away.

Bhante literally, ‘venerable sir’; term used to address monks.

Bh±van± mental development, meditation. The two divisions of *bh±van±* are the development of calm (*samatha-bh±van±*), corresponding to concentration of mind (*sam±dhi*), and the development of insight (*vipassan±-bh±van±*), corresponding to wisdom (*paññ±*). Development of *samatha* will lead to the states of *jh±na*; development of *vipassan±* will lead to liberation. See *jh±na, paññ±, sam±dhi, vipassan±*.

Bh±van±-may± paññ± wisdom developing from personal, direct experience. See *paññ±*.

Bhavatu sabba maªgala½ “May all beings be happy.” A traditional phrase by which one expresses one’s goodwill towards others. (Literally, “May there be every happiness.”)

Bhikkhu (Buddhist) monk; meditator. Feminine form *bhikkhun²*: nun.

Bodhi enlightenment.

Bodhisatta literally, ‘enlightenment-being.’ One who is working to become a Buddha. Used to designate Siddhattha Gotama in the time before he achieved full enlightenment. (Sanskrit: *bodhisattva*.)

Bojjhaªga factor of enlightenment, i.e., quality that helps one to attain enlightenment. The seven such factors are awareness (*sati*), penetrating investigation of Dhamma (*Dhamma-vicaya*), effort (*viriya*), bliss (*p²ti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*sam±dhi*), equanimity (*upekkh±*).

Brahmacariya celibacy; a pure, saintly life.

Brahma-vih±ra the nature of a *brahm±*, hence sublime or divine state of mind, in which four pure qualities are present: selfless love (*mett±*), compassion (*karuº±*), joy at the good fortune of others (*mudit±*), equanimity towards all that one encounters (*upekkh±*); the systematic cultivation of these four qualities by a meditation practice.

Buddha enlightened person; one who, by one’s own efforts, has discovered the way to liberation, has practised it, and has reached the goal.

There are two types of Buddhas:
1) *pacceka-buddha*, ‘solitary’ or ‘silent’ Buddha, who is unable to teach the path to others;

2) *samm±-sambuddha*, ‘full’ or ‘perfect’ Buddha, who is able to teach others.

Buddha-s±sana the teachings of the Buddha; also, the period during which the teachings of the Buddha are available.

Cakka wheel. *Bhava-cakka*, wheel of continuing existence (i.e., process of suffering), equivalent to *sa½s±ra*. *Dhamma-cakka*, the wheel of Dhamma (i.e., the teaching or process of liberation). *Bhava-cakka* corresponds to the Chain of Conditioned Arising in its forward order. *Dhamma-cakka* corresponds to the chain in reverse order, leading not to the multiplication but to the eradication of suffering.

Caratha bhikkhave c±rikam go your ways, oh monks.

Chaµµha Saªg±yana Sixth Recitation. The six major councils in which the entire P±li canon was recited, edited and purified are known as *Saªg±yana*. The most recent one (*Chaµµha Saªg±yana)* was held in Rangoon, Burma in 1954-56.

Chauki a low seat.

Cint±-may± paññ± wisdom gained by intellectual analysis. See *paññ±*.

Citta mind. *Citt±nupassan±*, observation of the mind. See *satipaµµh±na*.

D±na charity, generosity, donation. One of the ten *p±ram²*.

Deva deity.

Dhamma phenomenon; object of mind; nature; natural law; law of liberation, i.e., teaching of an enlightened person. *Dhamm±nupassan±*, observation of the contents of the mind.
See *satipaµµh±na*. (Sanskrit: *dharma*.)

Dhamma-d³ta messenger of Dhamma.

Dhammapada ‘verses on Dhamma’ contained in *Sutta-piµaka* of *Tipiµaka*.

Dh±tu element (see *mah±-bh³t±ni*); natural condition, property.

Doh± rhyming couplet (Hindi).

Dosa aversion. Together with *r±ga* and *moha*, one of the three principal mental defilements.

Dukkha suffering, unsatisfactoriness. One of the three basic characteristics (see *lakkhaºa*). The first Noble Truth (see *sacca*).

Ehi-passiko a quality of Dhamma meaning ‘inviting one to come and see.’

Ek±yano maggo the one and only way

G±th± verse of poetry.

G±yatri mantra prayer mantra.

Gotama family name of the historical Buddha. (Sanskrit: *Gautama*.)

Indriya faculty. Used in this work to refer to the six spheres of perception (see *±yatana*) and the five mental strengths; see also *bala*.

J±ti birth, existence.

Jh±na state of mental absorption or trance. There are eight such states which may be attained by the practice of *sam±dhi*, or *samatha-bh±van±* (see

bh±van±). Cultivation of them brings tranquillity and bliss, but does not eradicate the deepest-rooted mental defilements.

Kal±pa / aµµha-kal±pa smallest indivisible unit of matter, composed of the four elements and their characteristics. See *mah±-bh³t±ni*.

Kaly±ºa-mitta literally, 'friend to one's welfare,' hence one who guides a person towards liberation, i.e., spiritual guide.

Kamma action, specifically an action performed by oneself that will have an effect on one's future. See *saªkh±ra*. (Sanskrit: *karma*.)

Kataññ³ grateful.

K±ya body. *K±y±nupassan±*, observation of body. See *satipaµµh±na*.

Khandha mass, group, aggregate. A human being is composed of five aggregates: matter (*r³pa*), consciousness (*viññ±ºa*), perception (*saññ±*), feeling/sensation (*vedan±*), reaction (*saªkh±ra*).

Khaºika sam±dhi concentration lasting for a moment; concentration sustained from moment to moment. See *sam±dhi*.

Kappa an aeon, the duration of one world cycle. *Bhadda-kappa*, the current aeon, one in which five Buddhas will arise. Gotama Buddha was the fourth.

Kh²rodak²bh³t± like milk and water mixed.

Kilesa mental defilement, negativity, mental impurity. *Anusaya kilesa*, latent defilement, impurity lying dormant in the unconscious.

Kusala wholesome, beneficial. Opposite *akusala*.

Lakkhaºa sign, distinguishing mark, characteristic. The three characteristics (*ti-lakkhaºa*) are *anicca, dukkha, anatt±*. The first two are common to all conditioned phenomena. The third is common to all phenomena, conditioned and unconditioned.

Lobha craving. Synonym of *r±ga*.

Loka 1. the macrocosm, i.e., universe, world, plane of existence, divided into three major divisions: *Ar³pa loka*, an immaterial world of *brahm±s*; *R³pa loka*, a fine material world of *brahm±s;* and *K±ma loka*, a sensual world of *devas*, humans and lower beings.
2. the microcosm, i.e., the mental-physical structure. *Loka-dhamm±*, worldly vicissitudes, the ups and downs of life that all must encounter—that is, gain or loss, victory or defeat, praise or blame, pleasure or pain.

Magga path. *Ariya aµµhaªgika magga*, the Noble Eightfold Path leading to liberation from suffering. It is divided into three stages or trainings:

I. *s²la*, morality, purity of vocal and physical actions:

- i. *samm±-v±c±*, right speech;
- ii. *samm±-kammanta*, right actions;
- iii. *samm±-±j²va*, right livelihood;

II. *sam±dhi*, concentration, control of one's own mind:

- iv. *samm±-v±y±ma*, right effort;
- v. *samm±-sati*, right awareness;
- vi. *samm±-sam±dhi*, right concentration;

III. *paññ±*, wisdom, insight which totally purifies the mind:

- vii. *samm±-saªkappa*, right thought;
- viii. *samm±-diµµhi*, right understanding.

Mah±-bh³t±ni the four elements, of which matter is composed:

paµhav²-dh±tu—earth element (weight);
±po-dh±tu—water element (cohesion);
tejo-dh±tu—fire element (temperature);
v±yo-dh±tu—air element (motion).

Mana mind sense door

Maªgala welfare, blessing, happiness.

M±ra death; negative force, evil one.

Mett± selfless love and good will. One of the qualities of a pure mind (see *brahma-vih±ra*); one of the *p±ram²*. *Mett±-bh±van±*, the systematic cultivation of *mett±* by a technique of meditation.

Micch± wrong

Micch±-diµµhi wrong view.

Moha ignorance, delusion. Synonym of *avijj±*. Together with *r±ga* and *dosa*, one of the three principal mental defilements.

N±ma mind. *N±ma-r³pa*, mind and matter, the mental-physical continuum. *N±ma-r³pa-viccheda*, the separation of mind and matter occurring at death or in the experience of *nibb±na*.

Nibb±na extinction; freedom from suffering; the ultimate reality; the unconditioned. *Parinibb±na*, death of an enlightened person. (Sanskrit: *nirv±ºa*.)

Nirodha cessation, eradication. Often used as a synonym of *nibb±na*. *Nirodha-sacca*, the truth of the cessation of suffering, third of the Four Noble Truths. See *sacca*.

Opaneyyiko also *opanayiko*, a quality of Dhamma meaning 'no step is wasted.'

O½k±ra mantra "om" mantra.

P±li line; text; the texts recording the teaching of the Buddha; hence language of these texts. Historical, linguistic, and archaeological evidence indicates that this was a language actually spoken in northern India at or near the time of the Buddha. At a later date, the texts were translated into Sanskrit, which was exclusively a literary language.

Pañca s²la see *s²la*.

Paññ± wisdom. The third of the three trainings by which the Noble Eightfold Path is practised (see *magga*). There are three kinds of wisdom: received wisdom (*suta-may± paññ±*), intellectual wisdom (*cint±-may± paññ±*), and experiential wisdom (*bh±van±-may± paññ±*). Of these, only the last can totally purify the mind; it is cultivated by the practice of *vipassan±-bh±van±*. Wisdom is one of the five mental strengths (see *bala*), the seven factors of enlightenment (see *bojjhaªga*), and the ten *p±ram²*.

P±ram² / p±ramit± perfection, virtue; wholesome mental quality that helps to dissolve egoism and thus leads one to liberation. The ten p±ram² are: charity (*d±na*), morality (*s²la*), renunciation (*nekkhamma*), wisdom (*paññ±*), effort (*viriya*), tolerance (*khanti*), truthfulness (*sacca*), strong determination (*adhiµµh±na*), selfless love (*mett±*), equanimity (*upekkh±*).

Parinibb±na see *nibb±na*.

Paritta citta literally "the small mind", thus, the surface level of the mind, the conscious mind.

Pariyatti theory of meditation.

Paµicca samupp±da the Chain of Conditioned Arising; causal genesis. The process, beginning in ignorance, by which one keeps making life after life of suffering for oneself.

Paµipatti practice of meditation.

Pratikrama°a ceremony performed by reciting a mantra in which one tries to bring the mind back to its original purity.

P³j± honour, worship, religious ritual or ceremony. The Buddha instructed that the only proper *p³j±* to honour him is the actual practice of his teachings, from the first step to the final goal.

Putra or a Buddha *putri* son or daughter of the Buddha.

R±ga craving. Together with *dosa* and *moha*, one of the three principal mental defilements. Synonym of *lobha*.

R³pa 1. matter; 2. visual object. See *¾yatana*, *Khandha*

Sacca truth. The Four Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*) are:

1. the truth of suffering (*dukkha-sacca*);
2. the truth of the origin of suffering (*samudaya-sacca*);
3. the truth of the cessation of suffering (*nirodha-sacca*);
4. the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*magga-sacca*).

S±dhu well done; well said. An expression of agreement or approval.

Sakad±g±m² 'once-returner'; one who has reached the second stage of enlightenment characterised by weakening of the fourth and fifth fetters: ill will and passion. This person will return to the material world for a maximum of one more lifetime. See *ariya*.

Sam±dhi concentration, control of one's own mind. The second of the three trainings by which the Noble Eightfold Path is practised (see *magga*). When cultivated as an end in itself, it leads to the attainment of the mental absorption (*jh±na*), but not to total liberation of the mind. Three types of *sam±dhi* are:

1. *kha°ika sam±dhi*, momentary concentration, concentration sustained from moment to moment;
2. *upac±ra sam±dhi*, 'neighbourhood' concentration, of a level approaching a state of absorption;

3. *appan± sam±dhi*, attainment concentration, a state of mental absorption (jh±na).

Of these, *khaºika sam±dhi* is sufficient preparation in order to be able to begin the practice of Vipassana.

Samagg± united.

S±maºera novice monk.

S±m±yika ceremoney involving mantra in which gratefulness is expressed for human life and forgiveness asked for and given for any wrong doing.

Sampajañña understanding of the totality of the mind-matter phenomenon, i.e., insight into its impermanent nature at the level of sensation.

Sa½s±ra cycle of rebirth; conditioned world; world of suffering.

Sandhy± prayer ceremoney to center the mind, i.e., aiming to make it equanimous.

Sandiµµhiko quality of Dhamma meaning 'to be realised within this life.'

Sangha congregation, community of ariyas, i.e., those who have experienced *nibb±na*; community of Buddhist monks or nuns; a member of the *ariya-saªgha, bhikkhu-saªgha,* or *bhikkhun²-saªgha.*

Saªkh±ra (mental) formation; volitional activity; mental reaction; mental conditioning. One of the five aggregates (*khandh±*), as well as the second link in the Chain of Conditioned Arising (*paµicca samupp±da*). *Saªkh±ra* is the *kamma*, the action that gives future results and that is actually responsible for shaping one's future life. *Bhava-saªkh±ra*, a *saªkh±ra* which is responsible for rebirth. (Sanskrit: *sa½sk±ra.*)

Saññ± (from *sa½yutta-ñ±ºa* conditioned knowledge) perception, recognition. One of the five aggregates (*khandh±*). It is ordinarily conditioned by one's past *saªkh±ra*, and therefore conveys a coloured image of reality. In the practice of Vipassana, *saññ±* is changed into *paññ±*, the understanding of reality as it is. It becomes *anicca-saññ±, dukkha-saññ±, anatta-saññ±, asubha-saññ±*—that is, the perception of impermanence, suffering, egolessness, and of the illusory nature of physical beauty.

S±sana dispensation of the Buddha; period of time in which the teaching of the Buddha is available.

Sati awareness. A constituent of the Noble Eightfold Path (see *magga*), as well as one of the five mental strengths (see *bala*) and the seven factors of enlightenment (see *bojjhaªga*). *¾n±p±na-sati*, awareness of respiration.

Satipaµµh±na the establishing of awareness. There are four interconnected aspects of *satipaµµh±na*:

1. observation of body (*k±y±nupassan±*);

2. observation of sensations arising within the body (*vedan±nupassan±*);

3. observation of mind (*citt±nupassan±*);

4. observation of the contents of the mind (*dhamm±nupassan±*).

All four are included in the observation of sensations, since sensations are directly related to body as well as to mind. The *Mah±sati-paµµh±na Sutta (D²gha Nik±ya, 22)* is the main primary source in which the theoretical basis for the practice of *vipassan±-bh±van±* is explained.

Siddhattha literally, 'one who has accomplished his task.' The personal name of the historical Buddha. (Sanskrit: *Siddh±rtha.*)

S²la morality; abstaining from physical and vocal actions that cause harm to oneself and others. The first of the three trainings by which the Noble Eightfold Path is practised (see *magga*). For a lay person, *s²la* is practised in daily life by following the Five Precepts (*pañca s²la*).

Sot±panna stream-enterer; one who has reached the first stage of enlightenment characterised by eradication of the first three fetters: personality belief, doubt, and attachment to rites and rituals. This person cannot be reborn in lower realms and will attain full liberation in a maximum of seven lifetimes. See *ariya*.

Suta-may± paññ± literally, wisdom gained from listening to others. Received wisdom. See *paññ±*.

Sutta discourse of the Buddha or one of his leading disciples. (Sanskrit: *s³tra*).

Taºh± literally, 'thirst.' Includes both craving and its reverse image of aversion. The Buddha identified *taºh±* as the cause of suffering (*samudaya-sacca*) in his first sermon, the "Discourse Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma" (*Dhammacakkap-pavattana Sutta*). In the Chain of Conditioned Arising (*paµicca samupp±da*) he explained that *taºh±* originates as a reaction to bodily sensations.

Tath±gata literally, 'thus-gone' or 'thus-come.' One who by walking on the path of reality has reached ultimate reality, i.e., an enlightened person. The term by which the Buddha commonly referred to himself.

Therav±da literally, 'teaching of the elders.' The teachings of the Buddha, in the form in which they have been preserved in the countries of south and south-east Asia (Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia). Generally recognised as the oldest form of the teachings.

Ý²k± sub-commentary of P±li Canon.

Tipiµaka literally, 'three baskets.' The three collections of the teachings of the Buddha, namely:

1. *Vinaya-piµaka*, the collection of monastic discipline;

2. *Sutta-piµaka*, the collection of discourses;

3. *Abhidhamma-piµaka*, the collection of the higher teaching, i.e., systematic philosophical exegesis of the Dhamma. (Sanskrit: *Tripiµaka.*)

Tuºh²bh±vo silence.

Up±c±riya deputy teacher.

Upekkh± equanimity; the state of mind free from craving, aversion, ignorance. One of the four pure states of mind (see *brahma-vih±ra*), the seven factors of enlightenment (see *bojjhaªga*), and the ten *p±ram²*.

Vedan± feeling/sensation. One of the five aggregates (*khandh±*). Described by the Buddha as having both mental and physical aspects; therefore *vedan±* offers a means to examine the totality of the mental-physical phenomenon. In the Chain of Conditioned Arising (*paµicca samupp±da*), the Buddha explained that *taºh±*, the cause of suffering, arises as a reaction to *vedan±*. By learning to observe *vedan±* objectively one can avoid any new reactions, and can experience directly within oneself the reality of impermanence (*anicca*). This experience is essential for the development of detachment, leading to liberation of the mind.

Vedan±nupassan± observation of sensations within the body. See *satipaµµh±na*.

Vih±ra monastery.

Vinaya Piµaka the section of the *Tipiµaka* containing the rules for the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhun²s* (monks and nuns).

Viññ±ºa consciousness, cognition. One of the five aggregates (*khandh±*).

Vipassan± literally, 'to see in a special way'; introspection, insight which purifies the mind; specifically insight into the impermanent, suffering, and egoless nature of the mental-physical structure. *Vipassan±-bh±van±*, the systematic development of insight through the meditation technique of observing the reality of oneself by observing sensations within the body.

Yath±-bh³ta literally, 'as it is.' The existing reality. *Yath±-bh³ta-ñ±ºa-dassana*, experiential knowledge of truth as it is.

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Vipassana Research Institute:

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P±li Tipiµaka Website:

http://www.tipitaka.org

Contains the *Chaµµha Saªg±yana Tipiµaka* in Roman script alongwith commentaries, subcommentaries and related P±li texts.

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Dhamma Bhavana, Vadodara Vipassana Samiti, 301 B Tower, Alkapuri Arcade, Opp. Welcomgroup Hotel, R. C. Dutt Road, Vadodara 390 007. Tel: (0265) 234 1375, 234 3302; 234 3304 Fax: 233 7361; Email: info@bhavana.dhamma.org

Dhamma Ambika, Vipassana Dhyan Kendra, (15 k.m. away from Navsari and Bilimora Railway Station) **Contact:** 1. GL/12 Nilanjan Complex Opp-Radha Krishna mandir, Near-Nutan Society, Maharshi Arvind Marg. Dudhia Talao-Navsari, 2. Ratanshibhai K Patel, Mob. 098250-44536, 3. Mohanbhai Patel, Mob. 09537266909.

Central and Eastern India

Dhamma Gaṅgā, Bara Mandir Ghat, Harishchandra Dutta Road, Panihati (Sodepur), Dist. 24 Parganas (N.), West Bengal 743 176. Tel: (033) 2553 2855 **Contact:** Office Kajaria, 22 Bonfield Lane, 2nd floor, Kolkata-700001 Tel: (033) 2242-3225/4561. 2) L. N. Todi, 123A Motilal Nehru Road, Kolkata-29 Tel: Res. 2485-4179, Mob. 98314-47701. Email: info@ganga.dhamma.org

Dhamma Baṅga, West Bengal

Dhamma Kānana, Vipassana Centre, Wainganga Tat, Rengatola, P.O. Garra, Balaghat. **City Contact:** Haridas Meshram, Ratan Kuti, 126, I.T.I. Road, Buddhi, Balaghat-481001. Tel: (07632) 248-145; Mobile: 94251-40015, 94254-47996; 2. Dinesh Meshram, Mobile: 94254-47996 Website: www.dhammakanana.in Email: info@kanana.dhamma.org

Dhamma Utkal, Vipassana Meditation Centre, Village Chanabera, Post Amsena, Via. Khariyar Road, Dist: Nuapada, Orissa-766106, Mob. 094062-37896, **Contact:** 1. S. N. Agrawal, Mob. 09438610007, 2. Purshottam J. Mob. 09437070505.

Dhamma Pāla, Madhya Pradesh Vipassana Samiti, Bhopal **City Contact:** Mr. Ashok Kela, E-1/82, Arera Colony, Bhopal 462 016; Tel: Off. (0755) 246 2351, 246 1243. Res. 246 8053; Fax: 246 8197; Email: info@pala.dhamma.org

Dhamma Bala, Vipassana Meditation Centre, Opposite Bhedaghat Thane, (1 km) Bapat Marg, Bhedaghat Jabalpur. Mobile. [91] 93005-06253. **Contact:** Vipassana Trust, C/o Madhu Medicine Stores, 1, Medicine Complex Extn., Near Shastri-Bridge, Model Road, Inside Bank of Baroda, Jabalpur 2. Tel: (0761) 400-6252; Mahesh, Mobile: 99815-98352. Email: info@bala.dhamma.org

Dhamma Rata, Dhamma Rata, 15 Kms from Ratlam, Behind Sai Temple, Village Dhamnod, Tehsil: Sailana, Dist: Ratlam-457001, M.P. Fax: 07412-403882, Mob. 099810-84822, 098275-35257. Email: info@rata.dhamma.org

Dhamma Mālavā, Indore Vipassana Centre, Village Jambudi Hapsi Opposite Gommatgiri, in front of Pitru mountain, Hatod Road, Indore 452 003 **Contact:** 1. Indore Vipassana International Foundation Trust, 582, M. G. Road Labhaganga, Indore, M.P. Email: info@malava.dhamma.org; dhammamalava@gmail.com, Tel: (0731) 4273313, 2. Shanbhudayal Sharma, Mobile: 98931-29888. Email: info@malava.dhamma.org

Dhamma Ketu, Village Thanod, via Anjora, Dist. Durg, Chattisgarh-491 001 Tel: (0788) 320-5513. **Contact:** 1) Mr. S. Khaire, Tel: 0788-2242757, Mob. 094252-34757, 2) Joshi, Mob. 090989-20246 Email: cljoshi2004@yahoo.com

Dhamma Licchavī, Vaishali Vipassana Centre, Ladaura Gram, Ladaura Pakri, Muzzaffarpur 843 113, Bihar. Tel: 99311-61290 **City Office:** Lalit Kunj, Atardah, Muzzaffarpur 842 002, Bihar. Tel: (0621) 224 0215, 224-7760; Mobile: 99311-61290, 94157-51053 Email: info@lichhavi.dhamma.org

Dhamma Bodhi, Bodh Gaya International Vipassana Meditation Centre, Gaya-Dobhi Road (15 km), Near Magadha University, Bodh Gaya-824234, Bihar. Tel: (0631) 320-1585, 220-0437; Mobile: 94312-24346, 94157-51053; **Course Office:** 99559-11556; Fax (0522) 235 190 Office: Tel: (0631) 220 0437, Mobile: 94716-03531 Email: info@bodhi.dhamma.org

Dhamma Upavana, Baracakiya, Bihar. **Contact:** Dr. Ishwarchandra Sinha. Khabhada Road, Muzaffarpur 842 001, Bihar. Mobile: 94700-10002

Dhamma Puri, Tripura Vipassana Meditation Centre, P. O. Machmara 799 265, Dist. North Tripura, Tripura Tel: (03822) 266 204, 266 238, 266 345; Agartala: Mr. Mohan Dewan: (0381) 223 0288; Mobile: 098621-54882; Email: info@puri.dhamma.org

Dhamma Sikkim, Sikkim. **Contact:** Mrs. Sheela Devi Chaurasia, 47 B, Bondel Road, Flat No.3, Kolkata 700 019 Tel: (033) 2282 1777; 2440 5590

Dhamma Pubbottara, Mizoram Vipassana Meditation Centre, Kamalanagar-II, CADC, Chawngte-C, Dist. Lawngtlai, Mizoram-796772. Email: mvmc.knagar@gmail.com, Contact: 1. Digambar Chakma, Tel: (0372) 2563683. Mobile: 94367-63708.

South India

Dhamma Khetta, Vipassana International Meditation Centre, Kusumnagar, (12.6 km) Nagarjun Sagar Road, Vanasthali Puram, Hyderabad 500 070, A.P. Tel: Off. (040) 2424 0290, Fax: 2424 1746; **City Off.** 2473 2569 Fax: C/o (040) 2461 3941; Website: www.khetta.dhamma.org Email: info@khetta.dhamma.org

Dhamma Setu, Chennai Vipassana Centre, 533, Pazhan Thandalam Road, Via Thiruneermalai Road, Thirumudivakkam, Chennai-600 044 Tel: (044) 2478 0953, 2478-3311; Mobile: 94440-21622; Website: www.setu.dhamma.org City Off. Meridian Apparels Limited, Meridian House 121/3, T.T.K. Road, Manickam Avenue, Chennai 600 018. Tel: (044) 24994646, 52111000; Fax: (044) 2499 4477, 5211 1777; **Contact:** S. K. Goenka, No. 2, Seethammal Road, Alwarpet, Chennai-600018. Tel: (044) 4201 1188, 4217 7200; Fax: 5201 1177; Mobile: 98407-55555; Email: info@setu.dhamma.org

Dhamma Paphulla, Bangalore Vipassana Centre, (23 km from City Raiway station,) Alur Village, Near Alur Panchayat office, Off Tumkur Road, Dasanapura Bangalore North Taluka 562 123. Tel: (080) 2371-2377, 23717106. 91-97395-91580, (10 am to 6 pm) 92423-57424 (9am-2pm, 4pm-6pm) and 93435-45388 (11 am to 3 pm) [Bus No. 256, 258, 258C from Majestic Bus Stand Gat down Makali (Near Himalaya Drugs), cross road and take auto] Email: info@paphulla.dhamma.org

Dhamma Nijjhāna, VIMC, Indur, Post Pocharam, Yedpalli Mandal, Pin-503 186, Dist. Nizamabad, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: (08467) 316 663; Mobile: 9989923133; Email: info@nijjhana.dhamma.org

Dhamma Vijaya, VIMC, Vijayarayai, Pedavegi Mandal (Post), Pin-534475, Dist. West Godavari. Tel: (08812) 225 522 [15 kms. from Eluru on Eluru-Chintalapudi Road]

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Dhamma Koṇḍañña, Vipassana International Meditation Centre, Kondapur, Via Sagareddy, Medak 502306. Mobile: 93920-93799. Email: info@kondanna.dhamma.org

Dhamma Ketana, Vipassana Meditation Centre, Mampra P. O. Kodukulanji (via) Chengannur, (8 kms from Chengannur Railway station), Alleppey District, Kerala, 689 508 Tel: (0479) 235-1616; Website: www.ketana.dhamma.org Email: info@ketana.dhamma.org

Dhamma Madhurā, Vipassana Meditation Centre, Dindigal Dist, Gandhigram P. O. Chettiyapatti (gramam) www.setu.dhamma.org **City Office:** Renuka Mehta, 19A, Krishnapuram Colony, S.F/6, Nalligai Appartment, Madurai-625014. Mobile: 09443728116, **Contact:** Lalji Vora, Mob: 09843052465 Email: dhammamadhura@gmail.com

Nepal

Dharmashringa, Nepal Vipassana Centre, PO. Box No. 12896, Budhanilkanth, Muhan Pokhari, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: [977] (01) 4371 655, 4371 007, **City Office:** Jyoti Bhawan, Kantipath, GPO Box 133 Kathmandu Tel: [977] (01) 4250 581, 4225 490; Fax: 4224 720, 4226 314; Website: www.np.dhamma.org Email: info@shringa.dhamma.org;

Dhamma Tarāi, Birganj Vipassana Centre, Parwanipur Parsa, Nepal, Tel: [977] (51) 621 115 **City office:** Sandip Building, Adarsha Nagar, Birganj, P.O. Box No.32, Tel:[977] (51) 521884; Fax: [977] (51) 580465; Mobile: 98042-44576 Email: info@tarai.dhamma.org

Dhamma Jananī, Lumbini Vipassana Centre, Near Lumbini Peace Flame, Rupandehi, Lumbini Zone, Nepal. Tel: [977] (071) 580 282 **Contact:** Mr. Gopal Bahadur Pokharel, Bairav Color Lab, Butwal, Khasyauli, Lumbini Zone, Nepal. Tel: (071) 541 549; Mobile: [977] 98570-20149 Email: info@janani.dhamma.org

Dhamma Birāṭa, Purwanchal Vipassana Centre, Phulbari Tole, South of Bus Park, Ithari-7, Sunsari, Nepal Tel: [977] (25) 585 521, **Contacts:** 1. (Biratnagar) Mr. Dev Kishan Mundada, Debanara, Goswara Road, Ward No. 9, Biratnagar, Nepal Tel: Off. [977] (21) 525486, Res. 527671; Fax: [977] (21) 526466; Email: info@birata.dhamma.org 2. (Dharan) Mr. Kamal Kumar Goyal, Tel: Off. [977] (25) 523528, Res 526829 Email: info@birata.dhamma.org

Dhamma Citavana, Chitwan Vipassana Centre, Mangalpur VDC Ward No 8, next to Bijaya Nagar Bazar, Chitwan, Nepal City office: Buddha Vihar, Narayanghat **Contacts:** (Narayanghat) 1. Mr. Hari Krishna Maharjan, Tel [977] (56) 520294, 528294; 2. Mr. Pancha Ram Pradhan, Tel [977] (56) 520228 Email: info@citavana.dhamma.org

Dhamma Kitti, Kirtipur Vipassana centre, Devdhoka, Kirtipur, Nepal **Contact:** Ramsurbir Maharjan, Samal Tole, Ward No.6, Kirtipur, Nepal

Dhamma Pokharā, Pokhara Vipassana Centre, Pachbhaiya, Lekhnath Municipality, Pokhara, Kaski, Nepal **Contact:** Mr. Nara Gurung, Tel: [977] (061) 691972; Mobile: 98462-32383; 98412-55688; Email: info@pokhara.dhamma.org

Cambodia

Dhamma Laṭṭhikā, Battambang Vipassana Centre, Trungmorn Mountain, National Route 10, District Phnom Sampeau, Battambang, Cambodia **Contact:** Phnom-Penh office: Mrs. Nary POC, Street 350, #35, Beng Keng Kang III, Khan Chamkar Morn, Phnom-Penh, Cambodia. P.O. Box 1014 Phnom-Penh, Cambodia Tel. [855] (012) 689 732; poc_nary@hotmail.com; **Local Contact:** Off: Tel: [855] (536) 488 588, 2. Mr. Sochet Kuoch, Tel: [855] (092) 931 647, [855] (012) 995 269 Email: mientan2000@yahoo.co.uk and ms_apsara@yahoo.com

Hong Kong

Dhamma Muttā, G.P.O. Box 5185, Hong Kong Tel: 852-2671 7031; Fax: 852-8147 3312 Email: info@hk.dhamma.org

Indonesia

Dhamma Jāvā, Jl. H. Achmad No.99; Kampung Bojong, Gunung Geulis, Kecamatan Sukaraja, Cisarua-Bogor, Indonesia. Tel: [62] (0251) 827-1008; Fax: [62] (021) 581-6663; Website: www.java.dhamma.org **Course Registration Office Address:** IVMF (Indonesia Vipassana Meditation Foundation), Jl. Tanjung Duren Barat I, No. 27 A, Lt. 4, Jakarta Barat, Indonesia Tel : [62] (021) 7066 3290 (7am to 10pm); Fax: [62] (021) 4585 7618 Email: info@java.dhamma.org

Iran

Dhamma Īran, Teheran Dhamma House Tehran Mehrshahr, Eram Bolvar, 219 Road, No. 158 Tel: 98-261-34026 97; website: www.iran.dhamma.org Email: info@iran.dhamma.org

Israel

Dhamma Pamoda, Kibbutz Deganya-B, Jordan Valley, Israel **City Contact:** Israel Vipassana Trust, P.O. Box 75, Ramat-Gan 52100, Israel Website: www.il.dhamma.org/os/Vipassana-centre-eng.asp Email: info@il.dhamma.org

Dhamma Korea, Choongbook, Korea. Dabo Temple, 17-1, samsong-ri, cheongcheon-myun, gwaesan-koon, choongbook, Korea. Tel: +82-010-8912-3566, +82-010-3044-8396 Website: www.kr.dhamma.org Email: dhammakor@gmail.com

Japan,

Dhamma Bhānu, Japan Vipassana Meditation Centre, Iwakamiyoku, Hatta, Mizucho-cho, Funai-gun, Kyoto 622 0324 Tel/Fax: [81] (0771) 86 0765, Email: info@bhanu.dhamma.org

Dhammādicca, 782-1 Kaminogo, Mutsuzawa-machi, Chosei-gun, Chiba, Japan 299 4413. Tel: [81] (475) 403 611. Website: www.adicca.dhamma.org

Malaysia

Dhamma Malaya, Malaysia Vipassana Centre, Centre Address: Gambang Plantation, opp. Univ. M.P. Lebuhraya MEC, Gambang, Pahang, Malaysia **Office Address:** No., 30B, Jalan SM12, Taman Sri Manja, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. Tel: [60] (16) 341 4776 (English Enquiry) Tel: [60] (12) 339 0089 (Mandarin Enquiry) Fax: [60] (3) 7785 1218; Website: www.malaya.dhamma.org Email: info@malaya.dhamma.org

Mongolia

Dhamma Mahāna, Vipassana center trust of Mongolia. Eronkhy said Amaryn Gudamj, Soyolyn Tov Orgoo, 9th floor, Suite 909, Mongolia Tel: [976] 9191 5892, 9909 9374; **Contact:** Central Post Office, P. O. Box 2146 Ulaanbaatar 211213, Mongolia Email: info@mahana.dhamma.org

Myanmar

Dhamma Joti, Vipassana Centre, Wingaba Yele Kyaung, Nga Htat Gyi Pagoda Road, Bahan, Yangon, Myanmar Tel: [95] (1) 549 290, 546660; Office: No. 77, Shwe Bon Tha Street, Yangon, Myanmar. Fax: [95] (1) 248 174 **Contact:** Mr. Banwari Goenka, Goenka Geha, 77 Shwe Bon Tha Street, Yangon, Myanmar Tel: [95] (1) 241 708, 253 601, 245 327, 245 201; Res. [95] (1) 556 920, 555 078, 554 459; Tel/Fax: Res. [95] (01) 556 920; Off. 248 174; Mobile: 95950-13929; Email: bandoola@mptmail.net.mm; goenka@ mptmail.net.mm Email: dhammajoti@mptmail.net.mm

Dhamma Ratana, Oak Pho Monastery, Myoma Quarter, Mogok, Myanmar **Contact:** Dr. Myo Aung, Shansu Quarter, Mogok. Mobile: [95] (09) 6970 840, 9031 861;

Dhamma Maṇḍapa, Bhamo Monastery, Bawdigone, Near Mandalay Arts & Science University, 39th Street, Mahar Aung Mye Tsp., Mandalay, Myanmar Tel: [95] (02) 39694 Email: info@mandala.dhamma.org

Dhamma Maṇḍala, Yetagun Taung, Mandalay, Myanmar, Tel: [95] (02) 57655 **Contact:** Dr Mya Maung, House No 33, 25th Street, (Between 81 and 82nd Street), Mandalay, Myanmar Tel: [95] (02) 57655, Email: info@mandala.dhamma.org

Dhamma Makuṭa, Mindadar Quarter, Mogok.Mandalay Division, Myanmar. Tel: [95] (09) 80-31861. Email: info@joti.dhamma.org

Dhamma Manorama, Main road to Maubin University, Maubin, Myanmar. Tel: **Contact:** U Hla Myint Tin, Headmaster, State High School, Maubin, Myanmar. Tel: [95] (045) 30470

Dhamma Mahimā, Yechan Oo Village, Mandalay-Lashio Road, Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Division, Myanmar. Tel: [95] (085) 21501. Email: info@mandala.dhamma.org

Dhamma Manohara, Aung Tha Ya Qr, Thanbyu-Za Yet, Mon State **Contact:** Daw Khin Kyu Kyu Khine, No.64 Aungsan Road, Set-Thit Qr, Thanbyu-Zayet, Mon State, Myanmar. Tel: [95] (057) 25607

Dhamma Nidhi, Plot No. N71-72, Off Yangon-Pyay Road, Pyinma Ngu Sakyet Kwin, In Dagaw Village, Bago District, Myanmar. **Contact:** Moe Mya Mya (Micky), 262-264, Pyay Road, Dagon Centre, Block A, 3rd Floor, Sanchaung Township, Yangon11111, Myanmar. Tel: 95-1-503873, 503516~9, Email: dagon@mptmail.net.mm

Dhamma Ñāṇadhaja, Shwe Taung Oo Hill, Yin Ma Bin Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Division, Myanmar **Contact:** Dhamma Joti Vipassana Centre

Dhamma Lābha, Lasho, Myanmar

Dhamma Magga, Near Yangon, Off Yangon Pegu Highway, Myanmar

Dhamma Mahāpabbata, Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar

Dhamma Cetiya Paṭṭhāra, Kaytho, Myanmar

Dhamma Myuradipa, Irrawadi Division, Myanmar

Dhamma Pabbata, Muse, Myanmar

Dhamma Hita Sukha Geha, Insein Central Jail, Yangon, Myanmar

Dhamma Hita Sukha Geha-2, Central Jail Tharawaddy, Myanmar

Dhamma Rakkhita, Thayawaddi Prison, Bago, Myanmar

Dhamma Vimutti, Mandalay, Myanmar

Philippines

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Sri Lanka

Dhamma Kūṭa, Vipassana Meditation Centre, Mowbray, Hindagala, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka Tel/Fax: [94] (081) 238 5774; Tel: [94] (060) 280 0057; Website: www.lanka.com/dhamma/dhammakuta Email: dhamma@sltnet.lk

Dhamma Sobhā, Vipassana Meditation Centre Balika Vidyala Road, Pahala Kosgama, Kosgama, Sri Lanka Tel: [94] (36) 225-3955 Email: dhammasobhavmc@gmail.com

Dhamma Anurādha, Ichchankulama Wewa Road, Kalattewa, Kurundankulama, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. Tel: [94] (25) 222-6959; **Contact:** Mr. D.H. Henry, Opposite School, Wannithammannawa, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. Tel: [94] (25) 222-1887; Mobile. [94] (71) 418-2094. Website: www.anuradha.dhamma.org Email: info@anuradha.dhamma.org

Taiwan

Dhammodaya, No. 35, Lane 280, C hung-Ho Street, Section 2, Ta-Nan, Hsin She, Taichung 426, P. O Box No. 21, Taiwan Tel: [886] (4) 581 4265, 582 3932; Website: www.udaya.dhamma.org Email: dhammodaya@gmail.com

Dhamma Vikāsa, Taiwan Vipassana Centre - Dhamma Vikasa No. 1-1, Lane 100, Dingnong Road Laonong Village Liouguei Township Kaohsiung County Taiwan Republic of China Tel: [886] 7-688 1878 Fax: [886] 7-688 1879 Email: info@vikasa.dhamma.org

Thailand,

Dhamma Kamala, Thailand Vipassana Centre, 200 Yoo Pha Suk Road, Ban Nuen Pha Suk, Tambon Dong Khi Lek, Muang District, Prachinburi Province, 25000, Thailand Tel. [66] (037) 403- 514-6, [66] (037) 403 185; Website: http://www.kamala.dhamma.org/ Email: info@kamala.dhamma.org

Dhamma Ābhā, 138 Ban Huay Plu, Tambon Kaengsobha, Wangton District, Pitsanulok Province, 65220, Thailand Tel : [66] (81) 605-5576, [66] (86) 928-6077; Fax : [66] (55) 268 049; Website: http://www.abha.dhamma.org/ Email: info@abha.dhamma.org

Dhamma Suvaṇṇa, 112 Moo 1, Tambon Kong, Nongrua District, Khonkaen Province, 40240, Thailand Tel [66] (08) 9186-4499, [66] (08) 6233-4256; Fax [66] (043) 242-288; Website: http://www.suvanna.dhamma.org/ Email: info@suvanna.dhamma.org

Dhamma Kañcana, Mooban Wang Kayai, Tambon Prangpley, Sangklaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand Tel. [66] (08) 5046-3111 Fax [66](02) 993-2700 Email: info@kancana.dhamma.org

Dhamma Dhānī, 42/660 KC Garden Home Housing Estate, Nimit Mai Road, East Samwa Sub-district, Klongsamwa District, Bangkok 10510, Thailand Tel. [66] (02) 993-2711 Fax [66] (02) 993-2700 Email: info@dhani.dhamma.org

Dhamma Sīmanta, Chiengmai, Thailand **Contact:** Mr. Vitcha Klinpratoom, 67/86, Paholyotin 69, Anusaowaree, Bangkhen, BKK 10220 Thailand Tel: [66] (81) 645 7896; Fax: [66] (2) 279 2968; Email: vitchcha@yahoo.com Email: info@simanta.dhamma.org

Dhamma Porāṇo: A meditator has donated six acres of land near Nakorn Sri Dhammaraj (the name of the city), an important and ancient sea-port.

Dhamma Puneti, Udon Province, Thailand

Dhamma Canda Pabhā, Chantaburi, an eastern town about 245 kilometres from Bangkok

Australia & New Zealand,

Dhamma Bhūmi, Vipassana Centre, P. O. Box 103, Blackheath, NSW 2785, Australia Tel: [61] (02) 4787 7436; Fax: [61] (02) 4787 7221 Website: www.bhumi.dhamma.org Email: info@bhumi.dhamma.org

Dhamma Rasmi, Vipassana Centre Queensland, P. O. Box 119, Rules Road, Pomona, Qld 4568, Australia Tel: [61] (07) 5485 2452; Fax: [61] (07) 5485 2907 Website: www.rasmi.dhamma.org Email: info@rasmi.dhamma.org

Dhamma Pabhā, Vipassana Centre Tasmania, GPO Box 6, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia Tel: [61] (03) 6263 6785; Website: www.pabha.dhamma.org Course registration & information: [61] (03) 6228-6535 or (03) 6266-4343 Email: info@pabha.dhamma.org

Dhamma Āloka, P. O. Box 11, Woori Yallock, VIC 3139, Australia Tel: [61] (03) 5961 5722; Fax: [61] (03) 5961 5765 Website: www.aloka.dhamma.org Email: info@aloka.dhamma.org

Dhamma Ujjala, Mail to: PO Box 10292, BC Gouger Street, Adelaide SA 5000, [Lot 52, Emu Flat Road, Clare SA 5453, Australia] **Tel Contact:** Anne Blizzard [61] (0)8 8278 8278; Email: info@ujjala.dhamma.org

Dhamma Padīpa, Vipassana Foundation of WA, Australia, Website: www.dhamma.org.au **Contact:** Andrew Parry C/- 13 Goldsmith Road, Claremont, WA 6010, Australia. Tel: [61]-(8)-9388 9151. Email: andparry@optusnet.com.au Email: info@padipa.dhamma.org

Dhamma Medinī, 153 Burnside Road, RD3 Kaukapakapa, Rodney District, New Zealand Tel: [64] (09) 420 5319; Fax: [64] (09) 420 5320; Website: www.medini.dhamma.org Email: info@medini.dhamma.org

Dhamma Passaddhi, Northern Rivers region, New South Wales Email: info@passaddhi.dhamma.org

Europe,

Dhamma Dīpa, Harewood End, Herefordshire, HR2 8JS, UK Tel: [44] (01989) 730 234; male AT bungalow: [44] (01989) 730 204; female AT bungalow: [44] (01989) 731 024; Fax: [44] (01989) 730 450; Website: www.dipa.dhamma.org Email: info@dipa.dhamma.org

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Dhamma Dvāra, Vipassana Zentrum, Alte Strasse 6, 08606 Triebel, Germany Tel: [49] (37434) 79770; Website: www.dvara.dhamma.org Email: info@dvara.dhamma.org

Dhamma Mahī, France Vipassana Centre, Le Bois Planté, Louesme, F-89350 Champignelles, France. Tel: [33] (0386) 457 514; Fax [33] (0386) 457 620; Website: www.mahi.dhamma.org Email: info@mahi.dhamma.org

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